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FEBR. 27. 1666.

Tractatus cui Titulus, The Rule of Faith, *A doctissimo Viro* Johanne Tillotson *scriptus Imprimatur una cum Appendice.*

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THE

Rule of Faith,

OR AN

ANSWER

TO THE

TREATISE of Mr. *I. S*

Entitled,

SURE-FOOTING, &c.

By *JOHN TILLOTSON*, D. D
Dean of *CANTERBURY*.

To which is Adjoyned

A REPLY

TO

Mr. *I. S.* his 3d APPENDIX, &c

By *EDW. STILLINGFLEET*, D. D.
Dean of St. *PAULS*.

The Third Edition.

LONDON,
Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer* at the three Pigeons
againſt the Royal Exchange in *Cornhill*. 1688.

To my Honoured and Learned Friend Dr. *Stillingfleet.*

SIR,

I *Have with a great deal of pleaſure and ſatisfaction read over your* Book, *which I find in every part anſwerable to its* Title, *viz.* A Rational Account of the Grounds of the Proteſtant Religion. *And now I thank you for it, not onely as a private favour, but a publick benefit. No ſooner had I peruſed it, but I met with a* Diſcourſe *entituled,* Sure-footing in Chriſtianity. *And although I have no ſmall prejudice againſt Books with conceited Titles, yet I was tempted to look into this, becauſe it pretended to contain* Animadverſions on ſome Paſſages *in your Book which I had ſo lately read over. Upon peruſal of which* Animadverſions, *I found that the* Authour *of them had attaqued (and in his own opinion confuted) a page or two in your Book. This drew me on to take a view of his main* Diſcourſes; *which becauſe*

they are in great vogue among ſome of his own Party, and do with an unuſual kind of confidence and oſtentation pretend to the neweſt and moſt exact faſhion *of writing* Controverſie, *as being all along* demonſtrative *and built upon* ſelf-evident Principles: *Therefore I reſolved throughly to examine them, that I might diſcover (if I could) upon what ſo firm and ſolid Foundations this* High *and* Mighty *Confidence was built.*

But before I had entred upon this undertaking, I met with a Letter *from the Authour of* Sure-footing *to his* Anſwerer, *directing him how he ought to demean himſelf in his Anſwer. In which* Letter, *though there be many things liable to great exception, yet becauſe I am unwilling to be diverted from the main* Queſtion, *I ſhall not argue with him about any of thoſe matters, onely take leave to uſe the ſame liberty in managing my Anſwer, which he hath aſſumed to himſelf, in preſcribing Laws to me about it: Therefore without taking any farther notice of his* Letter, *I addreſs my ſelf to his* Book.

THE

THE Rule of Faith.

PART I.

The Explication and State of the Queſtion.

SECT. I.

§ 1. THE Queſtion he propounds to himſelf to debate, is, *What is the Rule of Faith?* In order to the reſolution whereof, he endeavours, The Explication of the Terms of the Queſtion.

Firſt, To fix the true notion of theſe two Terms, *Rule*, and *Faith*. Which way of proceeding I cannot but allow to be very proper and reaſonable; but I can by no means think his explication of thoſe Terms to be ſufficient. He tells us, That *a Rule is that which is able to regulate, or guide him that uſeth it:* In which deſcription, as in many other paſſages of his Book, he is plainly guilty of that which he taxeth in Mr. * *Whitby*, that is, the confounding of a *Rule* and a *Guide*, by making *Regulating* and *Guiding* to be equiva- * P. 180.

lent words. But for this I am no farther concerned, than to take notice of it by the way: The fault which I find in this *definition* is, that it doth not make the thing plainer than it was before; ſo that no man is the wiſer for it, nor one jot nearer knowing what a *Rule* is. He pretends to tell *Engliſh-men* what a *Rule* is; and for their clearer underſtanding of this *word*, he explains it by a *word* leſs remov'd from the *Latin*, *A Rule is that which is able to regulate him that uſeth it*; juſt as if a man ſhould go about to explain what a *Law-giver* is, by ſaying, *he is one that hath the power of Legiſlation.* Of the two, he had much better have ſaid, that a *Rule* is a thing that is able to rule him that uſeth it, though this be nothing but an explication of the ſame *word* by it ſelf.

§ 2. Not much better is his explication of the term *Faith*, which he tells us, *in the common ſenſe of Mankind, is the ſame with Believing.* * He declar'd indeed before-hand, that he did not *intend to give rigorous School-definitions of either this or the former word*; and (to doe him right) he hath not in the leaſt ſwerv'd from his intention. It were to be wiſh'd he had prefac'd ſome ſuch thing to his *Demonſtrations*; for the Reader will find, that they are not one whit more *rigorous* than his *Definitions*; the latter of which doth very much reſemble the Country-man's way of defining, who being ask'd by his Neighbour what

* P. 4.

what an *Invaſion* was, after ſome ſtudy, told him very gravely, that *an Invaſion* was *as if he ſhould ſay an Invaſion*; In like manner Mr. *S.* tells us, that *Faith* (or which is all one, *Belief*) *is the ſame with Believing*; which in my apprehenſion is but a Country-definition, unleſs the interpoſing of thoſe ſolemn words [*in the common ſenſe of Mankind*] may be thought to mend the matter. This puts me in mind of what Mr. *S.* ſays in his * *Tranſition* (as he calls it) where he gives the Reader an account what feats he hath done in his Book: *He will ſee* (ſays he) *I take my Riſe at the meaning of the words* Rule *and* Faith; *this known, I eſtabliſh my Firſt Principles in this preſent matter, to be theſe*, viz. *A Rule is a Rule, Faith is Faith.* This is the right *ſelf-evident method* he talks ſo much of, and his *Principles* agree admirably well with his *Definitions.* If he had but proceeded in the ſame method, and added, that *A Rule of Faith is a Rule of Faith*; that *Oral Tradition is Oral Tradition*; and that to ſay, *Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, is as much as to ſay, *Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, the whole buſineſs had been concluded without any more adoe; and I think no body would have gone about to confute him.

* P. 159.

§ 3. Rejecting then his way of Definition, as inept and frivolous, and no ways tending to give a man a clearer notion of things, I

ſhall endeavour to explain a little better (if I can) the meaning of theſe Terms.

A *Rule* (when we ſpeak of a *Rule of Faith*) is a Metaphorical word, which in its firſt and proper ſenſe being applied to *material* and *ſenſible* things, is the *Meaſure* according to which we judge of the ſtreightneſs and crookedneſs of things. And from hence it is transferred by analogy to things *moral* or *intellectual*. A *moral Rule* is the *Meaſure* according to which we judge, whether a thing be *good* or *evil*; and this kind of Rule is that which is commonly called a *Law*, and the agreement or diſagreement of our actions to this Rule, is ſutably to the Metaphor called *rectitude*, or *obliquity*. An *intellectual Rule* is the *Meaſure* according to which we judge whether a thing be *true* or *falſe*; and this is either *general*, or more *particular*. Common notions and the acknowledged Principles of Reaſon, are that *general Rule*, according to which we judge whether a thing be *true* or *falſe*. The particular Principles of every Science are the more particular Rules, according to which we judge whether things in that Science be *true* or *falſe*. So that the *general* notion of a *Rule* is that it is *a meaſure, by the agreement or diſagreement to which we judge of all things of that kind to which it belongs*.

§ 4. *Faith*, though both among ſacred and prophane Writers, it be uſed many times more

more *generally*, for a perſuaſion or aſſent of the mind to any thing wrought in us by any kind of argument; yet, as it is a Term of Art uſed by *Divines*, it ſignifies that *particular* kind of aſſent which is wrought in us by *Teſtimony* or *Authority*. So that *Divine Faith* which we are now ſpeaking of, is an aſſent to a thing upon the teſtimony or authority of God, or, which is all one, an *aſſent to a truth upon Divine revelation.*

§ 5. A *Rule of Faith* is the *Meaſure*, according to which we judge what matters we are to aſſent to, as revealed to us by God, and what not. And more particularly, the *Rule of Chriſtian Faith* is the Meaſure, according to which we are to judge what we ought to aſſent to, as the Doctrine revealed by *Chriſt* to the world, and what not.

§ 6. So that this Queſtion, *What is the Rule of Chriſtian Faith?* ſuppoſeth a Doctrine revealed by Chriſt to the world; and that *that* Doctrine was intelligibly and intirely delivered by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, and ſufficient confirmation given to it, that this Doctrine was in the ſame manner publiſhed to the world by the Apoſtles, who likewiſe gave ſufficient evidence of the truth of it. All this is neceſſarily ſuppoſed in the Queſtion: For it would be in vain to enquire whether this or that be the Rule of Chriſtian Faith, if ſuch a thing as the Chriſtian Faith were not firſt ſuppoſed. When therefore we enquire what is

the Rule of Chriſtian Faith? the meaning of that enquiry is, by what way and means the knowledge of Chriſt's Doctrine is conveyed certainly down to us, who live at the diſtance of ſo many Ages from the time of its firſt delivery; For this being known, we have the *Rule of Faith*; *that is*, a meaſure by which we may judge what we are to aſſent to, as the Doctrine of Chriſt, and what not. So that when any Queſtion ariſeth about any particular Propoſition, whether this be part of Chriſt's Doctrine, we may be able by this *Rule* to reſolve it.

SECT. II.

Mr. S's Rule of Faith.

§ 1. THe next thing to be conſidered is his reſolution of this Queſtion; by which we ſhall know what his opinion is concerning the *Rule of Faith*; for that being known, the Controverſie between us will eaſily be ſtated.

His opinion in general is, that *oral* or *practical Tradition* (in oppoſition to *writing*; or any other way that can be aſſigned) is *the Rule of Faith*. By *oral or practical Tradition*, he means * *a delivery down from hand to hand (by words, and a conſtant courſe of frequent and viſible actions, conformable to thoſe words) of the ſenſe and faith of Forefathers.*

* P. 41.

§ 2. Now that I may bring the Controverſie between us to a clear ſtate, I am firſt to

to take a more particular view of his Opinion concerning the *Rule of Faith*, that ſo I may the better underſtand how much he attributes to Oral Tradition, and what to the Scriptures, or written Tradition. And then I am to lay down the Proteſtant *Rule of Faith*, that ſo it may appear how far we agree, and how far we differ. The ſum of what he attributes to Oral Tradition, ſo far as can be collected out of ſo obſcure and confuſed a Diſcourſe, may be reduced to theſe five Heads.

§ 3. *Firſt*, That the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion was delivered by Chriſt to the Apoſtles, and by them publiſhed to the World; and that the Age which firſt received it from the Apoſtles, delivered it as they received it, without any change or corruption to their Children, and they to theirs, and ſo it went on ſolely by this way of Oral Tradition. This is the ſum of his Explication of Tradition, *Diſc. 5th.*

§ 4. *Secondly*, That this way alone is not onely ſufficient to convey this Doctrine down to all Ages certainly, and without any alteration; but it is the onely poſſible way that can be imagined of conveying down a Doctrine ſecurely from one Age to another. And this is the natural reſult of his Diſcourſe about the *Properties* of a *Rule of Faith*: For if the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* do belong to Oral Tradition, then it is a ſufficient means; and if thoſe Properties do ſolely and eſſentially

eſſentially appertain to it, and are incompatible to any thing elſe (as he endeavours to prove) then it is impoſſible there ſhould be any other way.

§ 5. *Thirdly*, That it is impoſſible this means ſhould fail, or miſs of its end; that is, the Doctrine of Chriſt being once put into this way of conveyance, it can neither ceaſe to deſcend, nor be at any time corrupted or changed in its deſcent. This is that which his *Demonſtrations* pretend to prove.

§ 6. *Fourthly*, That the infallibility of Oral Tradition, or the impoſſibility of its failing, is a firſt and ſelf evident principle. This he frequently aſſerts throughout his Book.

§ 7. *Fifthly*, That this way of Oral Tradition, hath *de facto* in all Ages been acknowledged by Chriſtians, as the onely way and means whereby the Doctrine of Chriſtianity hath been conveyed down to them. And this is that which he attempts to prove from the *Conſent of Authority*.

§ 8. As for the Scriptures, he grants them indeed to have been written by men divinely inſpired, and to contain a Divine Doctrine, even the ſame which is delivered by Oral Tradition; ſo he tells us *, *'Tis certain the Apoſtles taught the ſame Doctrine they writ.* But then he denies it to be of any uſe without Oral Tradition, becauſe neither the *letter*, nor *ſenſe* of it, can without that be aſcertain'd; ſo he ſaith in his Letter to Dr. *Caſaubon* *, *As for*

* P. 117.

* P. 337.

for the Scriptures (aſcertaining their letter and ſenſe, which is done by Tradition) 'tis clear they are of incomparable value; not onely for the Divine Doctrine contained in them, but alſo for many particular paſſages, whoſe ſource or firſt atteſtation not being univerſal, nor their nature much practical, might poſſibly have been loſt in their conveyance down by Tradition. Where, though he give the Scriptures very good words, it is to be underſtood, provided they will be ſubordinate, and acknowledge that they owe their ſenſe and their being intelligible and uſefull to Oral Tradition. For if any man ſhall preſume to ſay, That this Book hath any certain ſenſe without Oral Tradition; or that God can write plainly and intelligibly, and that this Book which he hath endited is ſo written, and doth not depend upon Tradition for its ſenſe and interpretation; then the moſt ſcurrilous language is not bad enough for the Scriptures; then what are thoſe Sacred Writings*, but *Ink variouſly figured in a Book* *, *unſenſed Characters, waxen natur'd words, not yet ſenſed, nor having any certain Interpreter, but fit to be plaid upon diverſly by quirks of wit; that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing.* Theſe, with many other diſgraceſull terms, he very liberally beſtows upon Divine Oracles; the conſideration whereof, did it not miniſter too much horrour, would afford ſome comfort; for by this kind of rude uſage,

* Append. 4th. p. 319.
* P. 68.

uſage, ſo familiar with him towards his Adverſaries, one may reaſonably conjecture, that he doth not reckon the Scriptures among his Friends.

§ 9. And whereas he ſaith, *That the Scriptures have preſerv'd many particular paſſages, which becauſe their ſource or firſt atteſtation was not univerſal, nor their nature much practical, might poſſibly have been loſt in their conveyance down by Tradition*; this is impoſſible, according to his *Hypotheſis*. For if neither the Scriptures letter, nor the certain ſenſe of it, as to the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine could have been ſecured without Oral Tradition; that is, if we could not have known that thoſe paſſages which contain the main points of Chriſt's Doctrine, either had been written by men divinely inſpired, or what the ſenſe of them was, but from the conſonancy and agreement of thoſe paſſages with the Doctrine which was orally preached by the Apoſtles; how can we be certain either of the letter or ſenſe of other particular paſſages which muſt neceſſarily want this confirmation from Oral Tradition, becauſe *their firſt atteſtation was not univerſal, nor their nature much practical?* Nay, his diſcourſe plainly implies, that we can have no ſecurity at all either of the letter or ſenſe of any other parts of Scripture, but onely thoſe which are coincident with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine, as is evident from theſe words *, *Tradition*

* P. 116.

Tradition eſtabliſhed, the Church is provided of a certain and infallible Rule to preſerve a copy of the Scriptures Letter truely ſignificative of Chriſt's ſenſe, as far as it is coincident with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine preached at firſt; becauſe *ſenſe writ in mens hearts by Tradition, can eaſily guide them to correct the alteration of the outward letter.* This I perceive plainly is the thing they would be at, they would correct the *outward letter of Scripture* by *ſenſe written in the hearts*; and then inſtead of leaving out the ſecond Commandment, they would change it into a precept of *giving due worſhip to Images*, according to the *Council of Trent*; and a thouſand other alterations they muſt make in the *Bible*, to make it *truely ſignificative of the ſenſe* of their *Church.* But ſurely the outward letter of other paſſages of Scripture, which were not intended to ſignifie points of Faith, is equally liable to alterations; and yet the Church is not by Tradition provided of any way to correct theſe alterations when they happen; becauſe Tradition doth, as this *Corollary* implies, onely furniſh the Church with a certain and infallible Rule of preſerving a copy of the Scriptures letter, ſo far as it is coincident with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine.

§ 10. Again, he tells us *, *Tradition eſtabliſhed, the Church is provided of a certain and infallible Rule to interpret Scripture letter by, ſo as to arrive certainly at Chriſt's ſenſe as far* * P. 117.

as

as the letter concerns the body of Chriſtian Doctrine preached at firſt, or points requiſite to Salvation. So that whatever he may attribute to Scripture for faſhions ſake, and to *avoid Calumny with the Vulgar*, as he ſays very ingenuouſly in his explication of the 15*th* Corollary; nevertheleſs 'tis plain, that according to his own *Hypotheſis*, he cannot but look upon it as perfectly uſeleſs and pernicious. That 'tis altogether uſeleſs, according to his *Hypotheſis*, is plain; for the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine is ſecurely conveyed to us without it, and it can give no kind of confirmation to it, becauſe it receives all at its confirmation from it; onely the Church is ever and anon put to a great deal of trouble to correct the alteration of the outward letter, by tradition and ſenſe written in their hearts. And as for all other parts of Scripture which are not coincident with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine, we can have no certainty, either that the outward Letter is true; nor, if we could, can we poſſibly arrive at any certain ſenſe of them. And that it is intolerably pernicious, according to his *Hypotheſis*, is plain, becauſe * *every ſilly and upſtart Hereſie fathers it ſelf upon it*; and when men leave Tradition (as he ſuppoſeth all Hereticks do) the Scripture is the moſt dangerous engine that could have been invented; being to ſuch Perſons onely * *waxen natured words, not ſenſed, nor having any certain Interpreter*;

but

but fit to be play'd upon diverſly by quirks of wit; that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing. And indeed, if his *Hypotheſis* were true, the Scriptures might well deſerve all the contemptuous language which he uſeth againſt them; and * Mr. *White*'s compariſon of *them* with *Lilly*'s *Almanack*, would not onely be pardonable, but proper; and (unleſs he added it out of prudence, and for the Peoples ſake, whom he may think too ſuperſtitiouſly conceited of thoſe Books) he might have ſpared that cold excuſe which he makes for uſing this ſimilitude, that *it was agreeable rather to the impertinency of the Objection than the dignity of the Subject.* Certain it is, if theſe men are true to their own Principles, that notwithſtanding the high reverence and eſteem pretended to be born by them and their Church to the Scriptures, they muſt heartily deſpiſe them, and wiſh them out of the way, and even look upon it as a great overſight of the Divine Providence to trouble his Church with a Book, which, if their Diſcourſe be of any conſequence, can ſtand Catholicks in no ſtead at all, and is ſo dangerous and miſchievous a weapon in the hands of Hereticks.

* Apology for Tradition p. 165.

SECT.

SECT. III.

The Proteſtant Doctrine concerning the *Rule of Faith.*

§ 1. HAving thus taken a view of his opinion, and conſidered how much he attributes to Oral Tradition, and how little to the Scriptures; before I aſſail this *Hypotheſis*, I ſhall lay down the Proteſtant *Rule of Faith*; not that ſo much is neceſſary for the anſwering of his Book; but that he may have no colour of objection, that I proceed altogether in the deſtructive way, and overthrow his *Principle*, as he calls it, without ſubſtituting another in its room. The opinion then of the Proteſtants concerning the *Rule of Faith*, is this in general, That thoſe Books which we call the Holy Scriptures, are the means whereby the Chriſtian Doctrine hath been brought down to us. And that he may now clearly underſtand this, together with the grounds of it, (which in reaſon he ought to have done before he had forſaken us) I ſhall declare it more particularly in theſe following Propoſitions.

§ 2. 1. That the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion was by Chriſt delivered to the Apoſtles, and by them firſt preached to the World, and afterwards by them committed to Writing; which Writings, or Books, have been tranſmitted from one Age to another down to us. So far I take to be granted by our

our preſent Adverſaries. That the Chriſtian Doctrine was by Chriſt delivered to the Apoſtles, and by them publiſh'd to the World, is part of their own *Hypotheſis*. That this Doctrine was afterwards by the Apoſtles committed to writing, he alſo grants, *Corol.* 29. * *'Tis certain the Apoſtles taught the ſame Doctrine they writ*; and if ſo, it muſt be as certain that they writ the ſame Doctrine which they taught. I know it is the general Tenet of the Papiſts, that the Scriptures do not contain the entire body of Chriſtian Doctrine; but that beſides the Doctrines contained in Scripture, there are alſo others brought down to us, by oral or unwritten Tradition. But Mr. *S.* who ſuppoſeth the whole Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion to be certainly conveyed down to us ſolely by oral Tradition, doth not any where, that I remember, deny that all the ſame Doctrine is contained in the Scriptures; onely he denies the Scriptures to be a means ſufficient to convey this Doctrine to us with certainty, ſo that we can by them be infallibly aſſured what is Chriſt's Doctrine, and what not. Nay, he ſeems in that paſſage I laſt cited, to grant this; in ſaying, that the Apoſtles did both teach and write the ſame Doctrine. I am ſure Mr. *White* (whom he follows very cloſely throughout his whole Book) does not deny this, in his *Apology for Tradition*; * where he ſaith, that *it is not the Catholick*

* P. 117.

* P. 171.

poſition, that all its Doctrines are not conta ined in the Scriptures. And that thoſe Writings or Books which we call the Holy Scriptures, have been tranſmitted down to us, is unqueſtionable matter of fact, and granted univerſally by the Papiſts, as to all thoſe Books which are owned by Proteſtants for Canonical.

§ 3. *Secondly*, That the way of Writing is a ſufficient means to convey a Doctrine to the knowledge of thoſe who live in times very remote from the Age of its firſt delivery. According to his *Hypotheſis*, there is no poſſible way of conveying a Doctrine with certainty and ſecurity, beſides that of oral Tradition; the falſhood of which will ſufficiently appear, when I ſhall have ſhewn, that the true properties of a Rule of Faith do agree to the Scriptures, and not to oral Tradition. In the mean time, I ſhall onely offer this to his conſideration, that whatever can be orally delivered in plain and intelligible words, may be written in the ſame words; and that a Writing or Book which is publick, and in every ones hand, may be conveyed down with at leaſt as much certainty and ſecurity, and with as little danger of alteration as an oral Tradition, And if ſo, I underſtand not what can render it impoſſible for a Book to convey down a Doctrine to the knowledge of after-ages. Beſides, if he had looked well about him, he could not but have apprehended ſome little inconvenience in making that an

an eſſential part of his *Hypotheſis*, which is contradicted by plain and conſtant experience: For that any kind of Doctrine may be ſufficiently conveyed, by Books, to the knowledge of after-ages; provided thoſe Books be but written intelligibly, and preſerved from change and corruption in the conveyance, (both which I ſhall be ſo bold as to ſuppoſe poſſible) is as little doubted by the generality of mankind, as that there are Books. And ſurely we Chriſtians cannot think it impoſſible to convey a Doctrine to poſterity by Books, when we conſider that God himſelf pitched upon this way for conveyance of the Doctrine of the Jewiſh Religion to after-ages; becauſe it is not likely that ſo wiſe an Agent ſhould pitch upon a means whereby it was impoſſible he ſhould attain his end.

§ 4. *Thirdly*, That the Books of Scripture are ſufficiently plain, as to all things neceſſary to be believed, and practiſed. He that denies this, ought in reaſon to inſtance in ſome neceſſary point of Faith, or matter of Practice, which is not in ſome place of Scripture or other plainly delivered. For it is not a ſufficient objection to ſay, * that the greateſt wits among the Proteſtants differ about the ſenſe of thoſe Texts, wherein the generality of them ſuppoſe the Divinity of Chriſt to be plainly and clearly expreſſed: Becauſe, if nothing were to be accounted ſufficiently

* P. 38, 39.

ficiently plain, but what it is impoſſible a great wit ſhould be able to wreſt to any other ſenſe; not onely the Scriptures, but all other Books; and (which is worſt of all to him that makes this objection) all oral Tradition would fall into uncertainty. Doth the Traditionary Church pretend that the Doctrine of Chriſt's Divinity is conveyed down to her by oral Tradition, more plainly than it is expreſſed in Scripture? I would fain know what plainer words ſhe ever uſed to expreſs this point of Faith by, than what the Scripture uſeth; which expreſly calls him *God, the true God, God over all, bleſſed for evermore.* If it be ſaid, that thoſe who deny the Divinity of Chriſt have been able to evade theſe and all other Texts of Scripture, but they could never elude the definitions of the Church in that matter; it is eaſily anſwered, that the ſame Arts would equally have eluded both; but there was no reaſon why they ſhould trouble themſelves ſo much about the latter; for why ſhould they be ſolicitous to wreſt the definitions of *Councils*, and conform them to their own opinion, who had no regard to the Churches Authority? If thoſe *great Wits* (as he calls them) had believed the ſayings of Scripture to be of no greater authority than the definitions of Councils, they would have anſwered texts of Scripture, as they have done the definitions of Councils; not by endeavouring to interpret them to another

nother ſenſe, but by downright denying their Authority. So that it ſeems that *oral* Tradition is liable to the ſame inconvenience with the *written*, as to this particular.

§ 5. And of this I ſhall give him a plain inſtance in two *great Wits* of their Church the *preſent Pope*, and Mr. *White*; the one the *Head* of the *Traditionary Church*, as Mr. *S.* calls it; the other the great *Maſter* of the *Traditionary Doctrine*. Theſe two *great Wits*, the *Pope* and Mr. *White*, notwithſtanding the plainneſs of oral Tradition, and the impoſſibility of being ignorant of it, or miſtaking it, have yet been ſo unhappy as to differ about ſeveral points of Faith; inſomuch that Mr. *White* is unkindly cenſured for it at *Rome*, and perhaps here in *England* the Pope ſpeeds no better; however, the difference continues ſtill ſo wide, that Mr. *White* hath thought fit to diſobey the ſummons of his chief Paſtor, and like a prudent Man, rather to write againſt him here out of harmsway, than to venture the infallibility of plain *oral Tradition* for the *Doctrines* he maintains, againſt a *practical Tradition* which they have at *Rome* of killing Hereticks.

Methinks Mr. *S.* might have ſpared his brags, that he *hath evinced from clear reaſon*, * *that it is far more impoſſible to make a man not to be, than not to know what is rivetted into his ſoul by ſo oft repeated ſenſations*, (as the Chriſtian Faith is by Oral and Practical * P. 54.

Tradition) *and that it exceeds all the power of Nature (abſtracting from the caſes of madneſs, and violent diſeaſe) to blot knowledge thus fixt out of the ſoul of one ſingle Believer*; inſomuch, *that ſooner may all mankind periſh, than the regulative virtue of Tradition miſcarry; nay, ſooner may the ſinews of entire nature by overſtraining crack, and ſhe loſe all her activity and motion*, that is, *her ſelf; than one ſingle part of that innumerable multitude which integrate the vaſt teſtification, which we call Tradition, can poſſibly be violated*; * P. 116. when after he hath told us, * that the City of *Rome* was bleſt with *more vigorous cauſes to imprint Chriſt's Doctrine at firſt, and recommend it to the next Age, than were found any where elſe*; and conſequently, *that the ſtream of Tradition in its ſource and firſt putting into motion, was more particularly vigorous there than in any other See; and that the chief Paſtor of that See hath a particular Title to Infallibility built upon Tradition, above any other Paſtor whatſoever; not to dilate on the particular aſſiſtances to that Biſhop, ſpringing out of his divinely conſtituted Office*; when, I ſay, after all this quaint Reaſon and rumbling Rhetorick about the infallibility of Oral Tradition, and the particular infallibility of the Biſhop of *Rome* built on Tradition; we cannot but remember, that this great *Oracle* of *Oral Tradition* the *Pope*, and this great *Maſter* of it Mr. *White*, who is ſo peculiarly

liarly skill'd in the *Rule of Faith*, have ſo manifeſtly declar'd themſelves to differ in points of Faith. For that the *Pope* and his *Congregation general* at *Rome* have condemn'd all his Books for this reaſon, becauſe * *they contain ſeveral Propoſitions manifeſtly heretical*, is a ſign that theſe two *great Wits* do not very well hit it in matters of Faith; and either that they do not both agree in the ſame *Rule of Faith*, or that one of them does not rightly underſtand it, or not follow it. And now, why may not that which Mr. *S.* unjuſtly ſays concerning the uſe of Scripture, be upon this account juſtly apply'd to the buſineſs of Oral Tradition *? If we ſee two *ſuch eminent Wits* among the *Papiſts* (the *Pope*, and Mr *White*) *making uſe of the ſelf-ſame, and as they conceive, the beſt advantages* their *Rule of Faith* gives them; *and availing themſelves the beſt they can by acquired skills, yet differ* about matters of Faith; *what certainty can we undertakingly promiſe to weaker heads, that is to the generality* of the *Papiſts*, in whom the Governors of the Church do profeſſedly cheriſh ignorance for the increaſing of their devotion.

* Mr. *Wh. Exetaſis.* P. 9.

* P. 39.

§ 6. *Fourthly*, We have ſufficient aſſurance that the Books of Scripture are conveyed down to us, without any material corruption or alteration. And he that denies this, muſt either reject the authority of all Books, becauſe we cannot be certain whether they

be the ſame now that they were at firſt; or elſe, give ſome probable reaſon why theſe ſhould be more liable to corruption than others. But any man that conſiders things, will eaſily find that it is much more improbable that theſe Books ſhould have been either wilfully or involuntarily corrupted, in any thing material to Faith or a good Life, than any other Books in the World; whether we conſider the peculiar Providence of God engaged for the preſervation of them, or the peculiar circumſtances of theſe Books. If they were written by men divinely inſpired, and are of uſe to Chriſtians, as is acknowledged (at leaſt in words) on all hands; nothing is more credible, than that the ſame Divine Providence which took care for the publiſhing of them, would likewiſe be concerned to preſerve them entire. And if we conſider the peculiar circumſtances of theſe Books, we ſhall find it morally impoſſible, that they ſhould have been materially corrupted, becauſe being of univerſal and mighty concernment, and at firſt diffuſed into many hands, and ſoon after tranſlated into moſt Languages, and moſt paſſages in them cited in Books now extant, and all theſe now agreeing in all matters of importance, we have as great aſſurance as can be had concerning any thing of this nature, that they have not ſuffered any material alteration, and far greater than any man can have con-

concerning the incorruption of their oral Tradition, as I ſhall ſhew when I come to anſwer the *thing* which he calls Demonſtration.

§ 7. *Fifthly*, That *de facto* the Scripture hath been acknowledged by all Chriſtians, in former Ages, to be the means whereby the doctrine of Chriſt hath with greateſt certainty been conveyed to them. One good evidence of this is, That the Primitive Adverſaries of Chriſtian Religion did always look upon the Scripture as the ſtandard and meaſure of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and in all their writing againſt Chriſtianity, took that for granted to be the Chriſtian Faith which was contained in thoſe Books; there having not as yet any Philoſopher riſen up who had demonſtrated to the World, that a Doctrine could not with ſufficient certainty and clearneſs be conveyed by writing from one Age to another. But how abſurd had this method of confuting Chriſtian Religion been, if it had been then the publick profeſſion of Chriſtians, that the Scriptures were not the *Rule* of their Faith? How eaſie had it been for the Fathers, who apologized for, and defended Chriſtian Religion, to have told them they took a wrong meaſure of their Doctrine; for it was not the principle of Chriſtians, that their Faith was conveyed to them by the Scriptures, and therefore it was a fond undertaking to attack their Religion that way; but

but if they would effectually argue againſt it, they ought to enquire what that Doctrine was which was orally delivered from father to ſon, without which the Scriptures could ſignifie no more to them than an unknown *Cipher* without a *Key*; being of themſelves, without the light of Oral Tradition, onely an heap of unintelligible words, *unſenſed Characters*, and *Ink variouſly figured in a Book*; and therefore it was a groſs miſtake in them, to think they could underſtand the Chriſtian Religion (like their own Philoſophy) by reading of thoſe Books, or confute it by confuting them. Thus the *Fathers* might have defended their Religion; nay, they ought in all reaſon to have taken this courſe, and to have appealed from thoſe dead ſenſeleſs Books, to the *true Rule of Faith, the living voice of the Church Eſſential.* But doth Mr. *S.* find any thing to this purpoſe in the *Apologies* of the *Fathers?* If he hath diſcover'd any ſuch matter, he might doe well to acquaint the World with it, and make them wiſer; in the mean time, I ſhall inform him what I have found, that the Fathers never except againſt that method, but appeal frequently from the ſlanderous reports and miſrepreſentations which were made of their Doctrine to the Books of Scripture, as the true ſtandard of it.

§ 8. Another *evidence* that Chriſtians in all Ages ſince the Apoſtles times, have owned the

the Scriptures for the *Rule of* their *Faith*, is, That the *Fathers* in their *Homilies* did uſe conſtantly to declare to the People what they were to believe, and what they were to practiſe, out of the Scriptures; which had been moſt abſurd and ſenſleſs, had they believed not the Scriptures, but ſomething elſe to have been the Rule of Faith and Manners. For what could tend more to the ſeducing of the People from Mr. *S*'s ſuppoſed *Rule of Faith*, *Oral Tradition*, than to make a daily practice of declaring and confirming the Doctrines of the Chriſtian Faith from the Scriptures? Had the ancient Fathers been right for Mr. *S*'s way, they would not have built their Doctrine upon Scripture; perhaps not have mentioned it, for fear of giving the People an occaſion to grow familiar with ſo dangerous a Book; but rather (as their more prudent Poſterity have done) would have lock'd it up from the people in an unknown Tongue, and have ſet open the ſtores of good wholſome Traditions; and inſtead of telling them (as they do moſt frequently) *thus ſaith the Scripture*, would onely have told them, this is *the voice of the eſſential Church*; *thus it hath been delivered down by hand to us, from our Forefathers.*

§ 9. I might add for a *Third evidence*, the great malice of the Enemies and Perſecutors of Chriſtianity, againſt this Book; and their cruel endeavours to extort it out of the hands of

of Christians, and destroy it out of the World, that by this means they might extirpate Christianity. For it seems they thought, that the abolishing of this Book would have been the ruine of that Religion. But (according to Mr. *S*'s opinion) their malice wanted wit; for had all the Bibles in the world been burnt, Christian Religion would nevertheless have been entirely preserv'd, and safely transmitted down to us *by sense written in mens hearts*, with the good help of Mr. *S*'s Demonstration. Nay, their Church would have been a great gainer by it: For this Occasion and Parent of all Heresie the *Scripture*, being once out of the way, she might have had all in her own hands, and by leading the people in the safe paths of Tradition, and consequently of Science, might have made them wise enough to obey. Well, but suppose the Persecutors of Christianity mistook themselves in their design, how came the Christians in those days to be so tenacious of this Book, that rather than deliver it, they would yield up themselves to torments and death? And why did they look upon those who out of fear delivered up their Books, as Apostates and Renouncers of Christianity, and if they had not thought this Book to be the great instrument of their Faith and Salvation, and if it had really been of no greater consideration than Mr. *W*. and Mr. *S*. would make it? why should they be so loth to part with a few *unsens'd Characters*,

Characters, waxen natur'd words, to be play'd upon diverſly by quirks of wit, that is, *apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing?* Why ſhould they value their lives at ſo cheap a rate as to throw them away for a few inſignificant ſcrawls, and to ſhed their bloud for *a little Ink variouſly figured in a Book?* Did they not know, that the ſafety of Chriſtianity did not depend upon this Book? Did no Chriſtian then underſtand that, which (according to Mr. *S.*) no Chriſtian can be ignorant of, *viz.* that not the Scripture, *but unmiſtakeable, and indefectible Oral Tradition* was the *Rule of Faith*? Why did they not conſider, that though this *Letter Rule* of Hereticks had been conſum'd to aſhes, yet their *Faith* would have lain ſafe, and *been preſerved entire* in its * *Spiritual Cauſes, Mens minds, the nobleſt pieces in Nature*? Some of them indeed did deliver up their Books, and were call'd *Traditores*, and I have ſome ground to believe, that theſe were the onely *Traditionary Chriſtians* of that time, and that the reſt were Confeſſours and Martyrs for the *Letter Rule.* And if this be not evidence enough, that the Scriptures have always been acknowledged by Chriſtians for the Rule of Faith, I ſhall, when I come to examine his Teſtimonies for Tradition, (with the good leave of his *diſtinction* between *Speculators* and *Teſtifiers*) prove by moſt expreſs Teſtimony, that it was the general opinion of the Fathers,

Fathers, *That the Scriptures are the Rule of Christian Faith*; and then, if his *demonstration* of the infallibility of Tradition will enforce, that as *Testifiers* they must needs have spoken otherwise, who can help it?

SECT. IV.

How much Protestants allow to Oral Tradition.

§ 1. HAving thus laid down the *Protestant Rule of Faith*, with the grounds of it; all that now remains for me to doe, towards the clear and full stating of the Controversie between us, is to take notice briefly, and with due limitations:

1. How much the Protestants do allow to Oral Tradition.

Secondly, what those things are which Mr. *S.* thinks fit to attribute to his *Rule of Faith*, which we see no cause to attribute to ours; And when this is done, any one may easily discern how far we differ.

§ 2. 1. How much Protestants do allow to Oral Tradition.

First, We grant that Oral Tradition in some circumstances may be a sufficient way of conveying a Doctrine; but withall we deny, that such circumstances are now in being. In the first Ages of the World, when the *credenda* or *Articles* of Religion, and the *agenda* or *Precepts* of it, were but few, and such as had the evidence of Natural light; When the World was contracted into a few Families in compa-

compariſon, and the age of man ordinarily extended to ſix or ſeven hundred years; it is eaſie to imagine, how ſuch a doctrine, in ſuch circumſtances, might have been propagated by Oral Tradition, without any great change or alterations. *Adam* lived till *Methuſelah* was above two hundred years old, *Methuſelah* lived till *Sem* was near an hundred, and *Sem* out-liv'd *Abraham*: So that this Tradition need not paſs through more than two hands, betwixt *Adam* and *Abraham*. But though this way was *ſufficient* to have preſerved Religion in the world, if men had not been wanting themſelves; yet we find it did not prove *effectual*. For through the corruption and negligence of men after the Flood, (if not before) when the world began to multiply, and the age of man was ſhortned, the knowledge and worſhip of the one true God was generally loſt in the world. And ſo far as appears by Scripture-Hiſtory, (the onely Record we have of thoſe times) when God called out *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, the whole world was lapſed into Polytheiſme and Idolatry. Therefore for the greater ſecurity of Religion afterwards, when the poſterity of *Abraham* was multiplied into a great Nation, the wiſedom of God did not think fit to entruſt the Doctrine of Religion any longer to the fallible and uncertain way of Tradition, but committed it to writing. Now that God pitched upon this way, after the world had

had ſadly experienced the unſucceſsfulneſs of the other, ſeems to be a very good evidence that this was the better and more ſecure way: it being the uſual method of the Divine diſpenſations, not to go backwards, but to move towards perfection, and to proceed from that which is leſs perfect to that which is more. And the Apoſtles * reaſoning concerning the two Covenants is very applicable to theſe two methods of conveying the Doctrine of Religion; *if the firſt had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for a ſecond.*

* Hebr. 8. 7.

§ 3. So likewiſe, when Chriſt revealed his Doctrine to the world, it was not in his lifetime committed to writing; becauſe it was entertained but by a few, who were his diſciples and followers, and who ſo long as he continued with them had a living Oracle to teach them. After his death the Apoſtles, who were to publiſh this Doctrine to the world, were aſſiſted by an infallible Spirit, ſo as they were ſecured from error and miſtake in the delivery of it. But when this extraordinary aſſiſtance failed, there was need of ſome other means to convey it to poſterity, that ſo it might be a fixt and ſtanding Rule of Faith and Manners to the end of the world. To this end the providence of God took care to have it committed to writing. And that Mr. *S.* may ſee this is not a conjecture of Proteſtants, but the ſenſe of former times, I ſhall refer him to St. *Chryſoſtom,*

(*Homil.*

(*Homil.* 1. *in Matth.*) who tells us, *That Chriſt left nothing in writing to his Apoſtles; but inſtead thereof did promiſe to beſtow upon them the grace of his holy Spirit, ſaying,* John 14. He ſhall bring all things to your remembrance, &c. *But becauſe in progreſs of time there were many grievous miſcarriages both in matter of Opinion, and alſo of Life and Manners; therefore it was requiſite that the memory of this Doctrine ſhould be preſerved by writing.* So long then as the Apoſtles lived, who were thus infallibly aſſiſted, the way of Oral Tradition was ſecure, but no longer; nor even then from the nature of the thing, but from that extraordinary and ſupernatural aſſiſtance which accompanied the deliverers.

§ 4. And therefore it is no good way of Argument againſt the way of Tradition by writing, which he lays ſo much weight upon, * *That the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors went not with Books in their hands to preach and deliver Chriſt's Doctrine, but words in their mouths; and that primitive antiquity learned their faith by another method, a long time before many of thoſe Books were univerſally ſpread among the vulgar.* For what if there was no need of writing this Doctrine, whilſt thoſe living Oracles, the Apoſtles, were preſent with the Church? Doth it therefore follow that there was no need of it afterwards when the Apoſtles were dead, and

* P. 40.

that extraordinary and ſupernatural aſſiſtance was ceaſed? If the Preachers now adays could give us any ſuch aſſurance, and confirm all they preach by ſuch frequent, and publick, and unqueſtionable miracles as the Apoſtles did; then we need not examine the Doctrines they taught by any other Rule, but ought to regulate our belief by what they delivered to us. But ſeeing this is not the caſe, *that* ought in all reaſon to be the Rule of our Faith, which hath brought down to us the Doctrine of Chriſt with the greateſt certainty: And this I ſhall prove the Scriptures to have done.

§ 5. So that in thoſe circumſtances I have mentioned, *We* allow Oral Tradition to have been a ſufficient way of conveying a Doctrine; but now conſidering the great increaſe of mankind, and the ſhortneſs of mans life in theſe latter ages of the world, and the long tract of time from the Apoſtles age down to us; and the innumerable accidents whereby, in the ſpace of 1500 years, Oral Tradition might receive inſenſible alterations, ſo as at laſt to become quite another thing from what it was at firſt, by paſſing through many hands: in which paſſage, all the miſtakes and corruptions which (in the ſeveral Ages through which it was tranſmitted) did happen, either through Ignorance, or Forgetfulneſs, or out of intereſt and deſign, are neceſſarily derived into the laſt: So that the farther

farther it goes, the more alteration it is liable to; becauſe as it paſſeth along, more Errours and Corruptions are infuſed into it. I ſay, conſidering all this, we deny, that the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion could with any probable ſecurity and certainty have been conveyed down to us by the way of Oral Tradition. And therefore do reaſonably believe, that God fore-ſeeing this, did in his wiſdom ſo order things, that thoſe perſons who were aſſiſted by an infallible ſpirit in the delivery of this Doctrine, ſhould before they left the world commit it to writing; which was accordingly done: And by this Inſtrument, the Doctrine of Faith hath been conveyed down to us.

§ 6. *Secondly*, We allow, that Tradition, *Oral* and *Written*, do give us ſufficient aſſurance that the Books of Scripture which we now have, are the very Books which were written by the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts: Nay farther that *Oral* Tradition alone is a competent evidence in this caſe; but withall we deny, That Oral Tradition is therefore to be accounted the *Rule of Faith*.

The general Aſſurance that we have concerning Books written long ago, that they are ſo ancient, and were written by thoſe whoſe names they bear, is a conſtant and uncontroll'd Tradition of this, tranſmitted from one Age to another; partly Orally, and partly by the Teſtimony of other Books.

Thus much is common to Scripture with other Books. But then the Scriptures have this peculiar advantage above other Books, that being of a greater and more univerſal concernment, they have been more common and in every bodies hands, more read and ſtudied than any other Books in the World whatſoever; and conſequently, they have a more univerſal and better grounded atteſtation. Moreover, they have not only been owned univerſally in all Ages by Chriſtians (except three or four Books of them, which for ſome time were queſtioned by ſome Churches, but have ſince been generally received) but the greateſt Enemies of our Religion, the Jews and Heathens, never queſtioned the Antiquity of them, but have always taken it for granted, that they were the very Books which the Apoſtles writ. And this is as great an aſſurance as we can have concerning any ancient Book, without a particular and immediate Revelation.

§ 7. And this Conceſſion doth not, as Mr. *S.* ſuppoſeth, make Oral Tradition to be finally the *Rule of Faith*; for the meaning of this queſtion, (*What is the Rule of Faith?*) Is, What is the next and immediate means whereby the knowledge of Chriſt's Doctrine is conveyed to us? So that although Oral Tradition be the means whereby we come to know that theſe are the Books of Scripture, yet theſe Books are the next and immediate means

means whereby we come to know what is Christ's Doctrine; and consequently, what we are to believe.

§ 8. Nor doth this Concession make Oral Tradition to be the *Rule of Faith*, by a parity of Reason; as if because we acknowledge that Oral Tradition alone can with competent certainty transmit a Book to After-Ages, we must therefore grant that it can with as much certainty convey a doctrine consisting of several Articles of Faith (nay very many, as Mr. *White* acknowledges *) and many Laws and Precepts of Life: So because Oral Tradition sufficiently assures us that *this* is *Magna Charta*, and *that* the *Statute-Book*, in which are contain'd *those Laws which it concerns every man to be skilfull in*; therefore by like parity of Reason it must follow, that Tradition it self is better than a Book, even *the best way imaginable, to convey down such Laws to us*. Mr. *S.* saith * expressly it is; but how truly, I appeal to experience, and the wisdom of all Law-givers, who seem to think otherwise. Tradition is already defin'd to us, *a delivery down from hand to hand, of the sense and faith of Fore-fathers*; i. e. of the Gospel, or message of Christ. Now suppose any Oral message, consisting of an hundred particularities, were to be delivered to an hundred several persons of different degrees of understanding and memory, by them to be conveyed to an hundred more, who were

* *Rushw.* Dial. 4. Sect. 9.

* P. 93.

to convey it to others, and ſo onwards, to a hundred deſcents; Is it probable this Meſſage, with all the particularities of it, would be as truly conveyed through ſo many mouths, as if it were written down in ſo many Letters, concerning which every Bearer ſhould need to ſay no more than this, That it was delivered to him as a Letter written by him whoſe name was ſubſcribed to it? I think it not probable, though the mens lives were concerned every one for the faithfull delivery of his Errand or Letter. For the *Letter* is a meſſage which no man can miſtake in, unleſs he will; but the *Errand* ſo difficult, and perplexed with its multitude of particulars, that it is an equal wager againſt every one of the Meſſengers, that he either forgets, or miſtakes ſomething in it; it is ten thouſand to one, that the firſt Hundred do not all agree in it; it is a Million to one, that the next Succeſſion do not all deliver it truly; for if any one of the firſt Hundred miſtook, or forgot any thing, it is then impoſſible that he that received it from him ſhould deliver it right; and ſo the farther it goes, the greater change it is liable to. Yet after all this I do not ſay, but it may be demonſtrated, in Mr. *S*'s way, to have more of certainty in it than the Original Letter.

§ 9. *Thirdly*, We allow, That the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion hath in all Ages been preached to the People by the Paſtors of the

the Church, and taught by Chriſtian Parents to their Children; but with great difference; by ſome more plainly, and truly, and perfectly; by others, with leſs care and exactneſs, according to the different degrees of ability and integrity in Paſtors or Parents; and likewiſe with very different ſucceſs, according to the different capacities and diſpoſitions of the Learners. We allow likewiſe, That there hath been a conſtant courſe of viſible actions, conformable in ſome meaſure to the Principles of Chriſtianity; but then we ſay that thoſe outward acts and circumſtances of Religion may have undergone great variations, and received great change, by addition to them, and defalcation from them, in ſeveral Ages. That this not only is poſſible, but hath actually happened, I ſhall ſhew when I come to anſwer his Demonſtrations. Now that ſeveral of the main Doctrines of Faith contained in the Scripture, and actions therein commanded, have been taught and practiſed by Chriſtians in all Ages (as the Articles ſummed up in the Apoſtles Creed, the uſe of the two Sacraments) is a good evidence ſo far, that the Scriptures contain the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion. But then if we conſider, how we come to know that ſuch points of Faith have been taught, and ſuch external Actions practiſed in all Ages, it is not enough to ſay, there is a preſent multitude of Chriſtians that profeſs to

have received ſuch Doctrines as ever believed and practiſed, and from hence to infer that they were ſo; the inconſequence of which Argument, I ſhall have a better occaſion to ſhew afterwards: But he that will prove this to any mans ſatisfaction, muſt make it evident from the beſt Monuments and Records of ſeveral Ages, that is, from the moſt Authentick Books of thoſe times, that ſuch Doctrines have in all thoſe Ages been conſtantly and univerſally taught and practiſed. But then if from thoſe Records of former times it appear, that other Doctrines, not contained in the Scriptures, were not taught and practiſed univerſally in all Ages, but have crept in by degrees, ſome in one Age, and ſome in another, according as Ignorance, and Superſtition in the People, Ambition and Intereſt in the chief Paſtors of the Church, have miniſtred occaſion and opportunity; and that the Innovators of theſe Doctrines and Practices, have all along pretended to confirm them out of Scripture, as the acknowledged *Rule of Faith*; and have likewiſe acknowledged the Books of Scripture to have deſcended without any material corruption or alteration, (all which will ſufficiently appear in the proceſs of my Diſcourſe) then cannot the Oral and Practical Tradition of the preſent Church, concerning any Doctrine, as ever believed and practiſed, which hath no real foundation in Scripture, be any argument

argument againſt theſe Books, as if they did not fully and clearly contain the Chriſtian Doctrine. And to ſay the Scripture is to be interpreted by Oral and Practical Tradition, is no more reaſonable, than it would be to interpret the ancient Books of the Law, by the preſent practice of it; which every one, that compares things fairly together, muſt acknowledge to be full of deviations from the ancient Law.

SECT. V.

§ 1. *2dly.* HOw much more he attributes to his Rule of Faith, than we think fit to attribute to ours.

How much Mr. *S.* attributes to his Rule of Faith, more than Proteſtants to theirs.

1. We do not ſay, that it is impoſſible in the nature of the thing, that this Rule ſhould fail, that is, either that theſe Books ſhould ceaſe to deſcend, or ſhould be corrupted. This we do not attribute to them, becauſe there is no need we ſhould: We believe the providence of God will take care of them, and ſecure them from being either loſt, or materially corrupted; yet we think it very poſſible, that all the Books in the World may be burnt, or otherwiſe deſtroyed. All that we affirm concerning our Rule of Faith, is that it is abundantly ſufficient (if men be not wanting to themſelves) to convey the Chriſtian Doctrine to all ſucceſſive Ages; and we think him very unreaſonable, that expects

expects that God ſhould doe more than what is abundantly enough, for the perpetuating of Chriſtian Religion in the world.

§ 2. *Secondly*, Nor do we ſay, that that certainty and aſſurance which we have, that theſe Books are the ſame that were written by the Apoſtles, is a *firſt* and *ſelf-evident Principle*; but only that it is a truth capable of evidence ſufficient, and as much as we can have for a thing of that nature. Mr. *S.* may, if he pleaſe, ſay that Traditions certainty is a firſt and ſelf-evident Principle; but then he that ſays this, ſhould take heed how he takes upon him to demonſtrate it. *Ariſtotle* was ſo wiſe as never to demonſtrate firſt Principles, for which he gives this very good reaſon, becauſe they cannot be demonſtrated. And moſt prudent men are of opinion, that a ſelf-evident Principle, of all things in the World, ſhould not be demonſtrated, becauſe it needs not. For to what purpoſe ſhould a man write a Book to prove that which every man muſt aſſent to, without any proof, ſo ſoon as it is propounded to him? I have always taken a ſelf-evident Principle to be ſuch a Propoſition; as having in it ſelf ſufficient evidence of its own truth, and not needing to be made evident by any thing elſe. If I be herein miſtaken, I deſire Mr. *S.* to inform me better.

§ 3. So that the true ſtate of the Controverſie between us, is, Whether *Oral* and *Practical*

Practical Tradition, in oppoſition to *Writing Books*, be the only way and means whereby the Doctrine of Chriſt can with certainty and ſecurity be conveyed down to us, who live at this diſtance from the age of Chriſt and his Apoſtles? This *He* affirms, and the *Proteſtants* deny; not only that it is the ſole means, but that it is ſufficient for the certain conveyance of this Doctrine; and withall affirm, that this Doctrine hath been conveyed down to us by the Books of holy Scripture, as the proper meaſure and ſtandard of our Religion: But then they do not exclude Oral Tradition from being one means of conveying to us the certain knowledge of theſe Books. Nor do they exclude the authentick Records of former Ages, nor the conſtant teaching and practice of this Doctrine, from being ſubordinate means and helps of conveying it from one age to another. Nay, ſo far are they from excluding theſe concurrent means, that they ſuppoſe them always to have been uſed, and to have been of great advantage for the propagating and explaining of this Doctrine, ſo far as they have been truly ſubordinate to, and regulated by theſe ſacred Oracles, the Holy Scriptures; which, they ſay, do truly and fully contain that Doctrine which Chriſt delivered to his Apoſtles, and they preached to the world. To illuſtrate this by an inſtance; ſuppoſe there were a Controverſie now on foot, how men might come

come to know what was the true *Art* of *Logick* which *Ariſtotle* taught his *Scholars*; and ſome ſhould be of opinion, that the only way to know this would be by Oral Tradition from his Scholars; which we might eaſily underſtand by conſulting thoſe of the preſent age, who learned it from thoſe who received it from them, who at laſt had it from *Ariſtotle* himſelf: But others ſhould think it the ſureſt way to ſtudy his *Organon*, a Book acknowledged by all his Scholars, to have been written by himſelf, and to contain that Doctrine which he taught them. They, who take this latter courſe, ſuppoſe the authority of Oral Tradition, for the conveying to them the knowledge of this Book; and do ſuppoſe this Doctrine to have been taught and practiſed in all Ages, and a great many Books to have been written by way of Comment and explication of this Doctrine; and that theſe have been good helps of promoting the knowledge of it. And they may well enough ſuppoſe all this, and yet be of opinion that the trueſt meaſure and ſtandard of *Ariſtotle*'s Doctrine is his own Book; and that it would be a fond thing in any man, by forcing an interpretation upon his Book either contrary to, or very foreign and remote from the obvious ſenſe of his words, to go about to reconcile this Book with that method of diſputing which is uſed by the profeſſed *Ariſtotelians* of the preſent age, and with

with all that Scholaſtick *Jargon* which Mr. *S.* learn'd at *Lisbon*, and has made him ſo great a man in the *Science of Controverſie*, as even to enable him to demonſtrate *firſt* and ſelf-evident Principles ; a trick not to be learn'd out of *Ariſtotle*'s *Organon*. The Application is ſo eaſie, that I need not make it.

THE

THE Rule of Faith.

PART II.

Concerning the Properties of the Rule of Faith; and whether they agree ſolely to Oral Tradition.

SECT. I.

§ 1. HAving thus endeavoured to bring the Controverſie between us, to its clear and true ſtate, that ſo we might not quarrel in the dark, and diſpute about we know not what; I come now to grapple more cloſely with his Book. And the main foundations of his Diſcourſe may be reduced to theſe three Heads.

Firſt, That the eſſential Properties of ſuch a way and means, as can with certainty and ſecurity convey down to us the Doctrine of Chriſt, belong ſolely to Oral Tradition. This he endeavours to prove in his *five* firſt *Diſcourſes*.

Secondly,

Secondly, That it is impoſſible that this way of Oral Tradition ſhould fail. And this he pretends to prove in his *four* laſt *Diſcourſes*.

Thirdly, That Oral Tradition hath been generally reputed by Chriſtians in all Ages, the ſole way and means of conveying down to them the Doctrine of Chriſt. And this he attempts to ſhew in his laſt Chapter, which he calls *The Conſent of Authority to the ſubſtance of his foregoing Diſcourſes*. If he make good theſe three things, he hath acquitted himſelf well in his undertaking. But whether he hath made them good or not, is now to be examined.

§ 2. *Firſt*, Whether the eſſential Properties of ſuch a way and means, as can with certainty and ſecurity convey down to us the knowledge of Chriſt's Doctrine, belong ſolely to Oral Tradition?

The true way to meaſure the eſſential Properties of this or that means, is by conſidering its ſufficiency for its end. For whatſoever is neceſſary to make any means ſufficient for the obtaining of its end, is to be reputed an eſſential Property of that Means, and nothing elſe. Now, becauſe the end we are ſpeaking of, is the conveyance of the knowledge of Chriſt's Doctrine to all thoſe who are concerned to know it, in ſuch a manner as they may be ſufficiently certain and ſecure that it hath received no change or corruption from

what it was when it was firſt delivered. From hence it appears, that the means to this end muſt have theſe two Properties. 1. It muſt be ſufficiently plain and intelligible. 2*ly*. It muſt be ſufficiently certain to us, *that is*, ſuch as we may be fully ſatisfied concerning it that it hath received no corruption or alteration. If it have theſe two conditions, it is ſufficient for its end; but if it want either of them, it muſt neceſſarily fall ſhort of its end. For if it be not plain and intelligible, it cannot convey this Doctrine to our knowledge; if it be not certain, we cannot be aſſured, that that Doctrine which it brings down to us for the Doctrine of Chriſt, is really ſuch.

§ 3. I know he aſſigns more Properties of this Means which he calls the *Rule of Faith*; but upon examination it will appear, that they either fall in with theſe two, or do not at all belong to it. As,

* P. 11. *Firſt*, That * *it muſt be plain and ſelf-evident to all, as to its exiſtence.* Nothing can be more frivolous, than to make this a Property of any thing; becauſe whoſoever enquires into the Properties of a thing is ſuppoſed to be already ſatisfied that the thing is.

* P. 11. *Secondly*, That it be * *evidenceable, as to its Ruling Power*, that is, as he explains himſelf, * P. 3. * *that men be capable of knowing, that it deſerves to be relied on as a Rule.* By which he

he muſt either underſtand the certainty of it; and then it falls in with the ſecond Property I mentioned, and is the ſame with the ſixth, which *he* lays down. Or elſe he means more generally, that it is the property of a Rule, that men be capable of knowing that it hath the Properties of a Rule. For I underſtand not, how a man can know that any thing deſerves to be relyed on as a Rule, otherwiſe than by knowing it hath the properties of a Rule, *that is*, that it is ſufficient for its end. But at this rate, a man may multiply the Properties of things without end, if the evidence of a thing, as to its exiſtence, be one Property; and then, that we be capable of knowing that it is ſuch a thing, be another.

§ 4. *Thirdly*, That it be * *apt to ſettle, and juſtify undoubting Perſons.* What he means here, by *ſetling undoubting Perſons*, I am not able, on the ſudden, to comprehend; becauſe I underſtand not what unſettles a man beſides doubting: for if a man be but ſo well ſatisfied about any thing, as to have no doubt concerning it, I do not eaſily apprehend how he can be ſettled better, *that is*, how his mind can be more at reſt, than not to doubt. But if by *undoubting Perſons*, he means thoſe who do not doubt for the preſent, but afterwards may doubt, then I perceive what he means by *apt to ſettle undoubting Perſons*, viz. *apt to ſettle Perſons when they do doubt, that is*, when they are *not undoubting Perſons*. As

* P. 12.

for *justifying undoubting Persons*, if he means that whosoever securely relies on this Rule, ought of right to be acquitted, as acting rationally in so doing; this is plainly consequent upon the two Properties I have laid down. For, if the means of conveying Christ's Doctrine be sufficiently plain and certain, every man that relies upon it is justified in so doing, because he trusts a means which is sufficient for its end.

*P. 12. § 5. *Fourthly*, That * it be *apt to satisfie fully the most Sceptical Dissenters, and Rational Doubters:* For its aptitude to satisfie *Rational Doubters*, that plainly follows from the sufficient certainty of it. But why it should be a necessary property of a Rule of Faith, to be apt to satisfie *the most Sceptical Dissenter*, I can no more divine, than I can, why he should call a *Dissenter Sceptical*, which are repugnant terms: For a Sceptick is one who neither assents to any thing, nor dissents, but is in a perpetual suspence; because he looks upon every opinion, as balanced by a contrary opinion of equal probability, without any inclination of the Scales either way. But if by *the most Sceptical Dissenter* he means onely a Sceptick, one that doth not believe the Doctrine of Christ, nor any thing else; then would I fain know, what that is which in reason is apt fully to satisfie such a person. If any thing will, sure a Demonstration will; but there is no aptitude at all in a Demonstration,

tion, to satisfie him who doubts whether there be any such thing as a Demonstration; and likewise questions the certainty of all those Principles, from whence any conclusion can be demonstrated. And those who are *most Sceptical*, profess to doubt of all this.

§ 6. *Fifthly*, That it * be *apt to convince the most obstinate, and acute Adversary.* If the Rule be plain and certain, the most *acute Adversary* may be convinced by it if he will, *that is*, if he be not obstinate; but if he be obstinate, *that is*, such a one as will not be convinced, but will persist in his Errour in despite of all evidence that can be offered him, then I must profess that I do not know any kind of evidence that is apt to convince that man that will not be convinced by any reason that can be propounded to him. And that he ought not to have expected this from any *Rule of Faith*, though never so self-evident, he might have learn't from the same *Authour*, in whom he may find his chief *Properties of the Rule of Faith*, if he had but had the patience to have consider'd his Explication of them; I mean Dr. *Holden* *, who lays down the second Property of *the Rule of Faith*, (or, as he calls it, *the means whereby we come to the knowledge of Revealed Truth*) in these words, *Another* (*viz.* Condition of this Means, &c.) *is, That it be apt of its own Nature, to afford the greatest, true and rational*

* P. 11, 12.

* Analys. Fid. L. 1. c. 3.

certainty, to all men without exception to whom the knowledge of it ſhall come; provided they be furniſh'd with the faculty of Reaſon, and have their minds purified from all Paſſion and Luſt, which do (as he tells us *Cap.* 6.) *often hinder the moſt ſagacious Perſons from underſtanding the moſt evident and manifeſt Truths.* Now I ſuppoſe *Obſtinacy* to be the effect of *Paſſion* and *Luſt*.

If Mr. *S.* mean, that *the Rule of Faith* muſt be apt to conquer *Obſtinacy*, and make men lay it aſide, I cannot underſtand this neither: unleſs he mean, that *the Rule of Faith* muſt be a *Cudgel*, which the Traditionary Church have been good at, and may uſe it again when occaſion ſerves; for none but they have Title to it *upon a Church-account*, as Mr. *S.* tells us, *Corol.* 10. But ſetting aſide *this*, I do not know any thing elſe that is *apt to conquer Obſtinacy:* Not the cleareſt Reaſon, or the ſtrongeſt Demonſtration; for that I am ſure is no ways fitted to combat a wilfull and unreaſonable humour with any probability of ſucceſs. And if any one doubt of this, if he will but make trial, he may eaſily be convinc'd by experience, how unapt obſtinate Perſons are to be convinc'd by Reaſon. I do not know any thing that ever carried greater evidence than the Doctrine of Chriſt, preached by himſelf and his Apoſtles to the obſtinate *Jews*, and confirmed by multitudes of unqueſtionable miracles; and yet we do not

not find by the ſucceſs of it, that it was ſo very apt to convince thoſe that were obſtinate. And no man can judge of the aptitude of a means to an end, otherwiſe than by the uſual and frequent ſucceſs of it when it is applied. Nor do I think that the Doctrine of the Goſpel was ever intended for that purpoſe. God hath provided no remedy for the wilfull and perverſe, but he hath done that which is ſufficient for the ſatisfying and winning over of thoſe who are teachable and willing to learn: And ſuch a diſpoſition ſuppoſeth a man to have laid aſide both *Scepticiſm* and *Obſtinacy*.

§ 7. *Sixthly*, That * it be *certain in it ſelf*. * P. 12.

Seventhly, That * it be *abſolutely aſcertainable to us*. * P. 12.

Theſe *two* are comprehended in the ſecond Property I laid down; ſo that I have nothing to ſay againſt them, but that the laſt looks very like a contradiction, *abſolutely aſcertainable to us*; which is to ſay, *with reſpect to us, without reſpect to us*; for *abſolutely* ſeems to exclude reſpect, and *to us* implies it.

Having thus ſhewn, that the ſeven *Properties* he mentions, are either coincident with thoſe two I have laid down, or conſequent upon them, or abſurd and impertinent; it remains, that the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* are thoſe two which I firſt named, and no more,

SECT. II.

That the Properties of a Rule of Faith belong to Scripture.

§ 1. LEt us now ſee how he endeavours to ſhew, that theſe Properties agree ſolely to Oral Tradition: He tells us there are but *two Pretenders* to this *Title* of being *the Rule of Faith, Scripture*, and *Oral Tradition*; theſe *Properties* do not belong to *Scripture*, and they do to *Oral Tradition*; therefore ſolely to it. A very good Argument, if he can prove theſe *two* things, *That theſe two Properties do not belong to Scripture; and that they do to Oral Tradition.*

§ 2. In order to the proving of the *Firſt*, that theſe Properties do not belong to Scripture, he premiſeth this Note, * *That we cannot by the Scriptures mean the ſenſe of them, but the Book*, that is, *ſuch or ſuch Characters not yet ſenſed, or interpreted.* But why can we not, by the Scriptures, mean the ſenſe of them? He gives this clear and admirable reaſon; becauſe the ſenſe of Scripture, is, *the things to be known, and theſe we confeſs are the very points of Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to aſcertain us.* Which is juſt as if a man ſhould reaſon thus: Thoſe who ſay the Statute-Book can convey to them the knowledge of the Statute-Law, cannot by the Statute-Book mean the ſenſe of it, but the Book; that is, ſuch or ſuch Characters not yet ſenſed or interpreted: Becauſe the ſenſe

* P. 13.

of

of the Statute-Book is the thing to be known; and theſe are the very Laws, the knowledge whereof is to be conveyed to them by this Book; which is to ſay, that a Book cannot convey to a man the knowledge of any matter, becauſe if it did, it would convey to him the thing to be known. But that he may farther ſee what excellent reaſoning this is, I ſhall apply this *Paragraph* to Oral Tradition; for the Argument holds every whit as well concerning that. *To ſpeak to them in their own language, who ſay* that Oral Tradition *is their Rule, we muſt premiſe this Note, that they cannot mean by* Oral Tradition, *the ſenſe of it, that is, the things to be known; for thoſe, they confeſs, are the very Points of Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to aſcertain us; when they ſay then, that* Oral Tradition *is the Rule of Faith, they can onely mean by* Oral Tradition, the words wherein it is delivered, *not yet ſenſed or interpreted, but as yet to be ſenſed; that is, ſuch or ſuch* ſounds, *with their aptneſs to ſignifie to them aſſuredly God's mind, or aſcertain them of their Faith; for abſtracting from the ſenſe, and actual ſignification of thoſe words, there is nothing imaginable left but thoſe ſounds, with their aptneſs to ſignifie it.* When he hath anſwered this Argument, he will have anſwered his own. In the mean while this Diſcourſe, that he who holds the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith, muſt needs by the Scrip-

tures mean a Book void of ſenſe, &c. Becauſe otherwiſe if by Scripture he ſhould underſtand a Book, that hath a certain ſenſe in it, that ſenſe muſt be the Doctrine of Chriſt, which is the very thing that this Book is to convey to us; I ſay, this Diſcourſe tends onely to prove it an abſurd thing for any man, that holds Scripture the means of conveying Chriſt's Doctrine, to underſtand by the Scripture, a Book that conveys Chriſt's Doctrine. This being his own reaſon, put into plain Engliſh, I leave the Reader to judge whether it be not ſomething ſhort of *perfect Science and Demonſtration.* Nay, if it were throughly examined, I doubt whether it would not fall ſhort of that low pitch of Science which he ſpeaks of in his *Preface*, where he tells us, that *the way of Science is to proceed from one piece of ſenſe to another.*

§ 3. Having premiſed this, that by the Scriptures *we* muſt mean onely dead Characters, that have no ſenſe under them, *He* proceeds to ſhew that theſe dead Characters have not the Properties of a Rule of Faith belonging to them. Which, although it be nothing to the purpoſe when he hath ſhewn it, yet it is very pleaſant to obſerve, by what croſs and untoward Arguments he goes about it: Of which I will give the Reader a taſte, by one or two inſtances.

In the firſt place he ſhews, that it cannot be evident to us that *theſe Books were written by*

by men divinely inſpired, becauſe * *till the ſeeming contradictions in thoſe Books are ſolved; which to doe, is one of the moſt difficult tasks in the world, they cannot be concluded to be of God's enditing.* Now how is this an Argument againſt thoſe, who by the Scriptures, muſt mean unſenſed letters and characters? I had always thought contradictions had been in the *ſenſe* of words, not in the *letters* and *characters*; but I perceive he hath a peculiar opinion, that the four and twenty letters do contradict one another. * P. 14.

The other inſtance ſhall be in his laſt Argument *, which is this, that the Scripture cannot be the *Rule of Faith*, becauſe *thoſe who are to be ruled and guided by the Scriptures letter to Faith*, cannot be *certain of the true ſenſe of it*; which is to ſay, that *unſenſed letters and characters* cannot be the *Rule of Faith*, becauſe the *Rule of Faith* muſt have a certain ſenſe, *that is*, muſt not be *unſenſed letters and characters*; which in plain Engliſh amounts to thus much, unſenſed letters and characters *cannot* be the *Rule of Faith*, *that they cannot.* * P. 17.

§ 4. And thus I might trace him through all his Properties of the *Rule of Faith*; and let the Reader ſee, how incomparably he demonſtrates the falſhood of this Proteſtant Tenet (as he calls it) that a ſenſleſs Book may be a *Rule of Faith.* But I am weary of purſuing him in theſe airy and phantaſtical combats,

bats, and ſhall leave him to fight with his own fancies, and batter down the Caſtles which himſelf hath built. Onely I think fit here to acquaint him, once for all, with a great Secret of the Proteſtant Doctrine, which it ſeems he hath hitherto been ignorant of (for I am ſtill more confirmed in my opinion, that he forſook our Religion before he underſtood it) that when they ſay, the Scriptures are the *Rule of Faith*, or the means whereby Chriſt's Doctrine is conveyed down to them, they mean by the Scriptures, Books written in ſuch words as do ſufficiently expreſs the ſenſe and meaning of Chriſt's Doctrine.

§ 5. And to ſatisfie him, that we are not abſurd and unreaſonable in ſuppoſing the Scriptures to be ſuch a Book, I would beg the favour of him to grant me theſe four things, or ſhew reaſon to the contrary.

Firſt, That whatever can be ſpoken in plain and intelligible words, and ſuch as have a certain ſenſe, may be written in the ſame words.

Secondly, That the ſame words are as intelligible when they are written, as when they are ſpoken.

Thirdly, That God, if he pleaſe, can endite a Book in as plain words as any of his creatures.

Fourthly, That we have no reaſon to think that God affects obſcurity, and envies that men

men ſhould underſtand him, in thoſe things which are neceſſary for them to know, and which muſt have been written to no purpoſe, if we cannot underſtand them. St. *Luke* * tells *Theophilus*, that he wrote the Hiſtory of Chriſt to him, on purpoſe to give him a *certain knowledge* of thoſe things which he writ. But how a Book which hath no *certain ſenſe*, ſhould give a man *certain knowledge* of things, is beyond my capacity. St. *John* * ſaith, that he purpoſely committed ſeveral of *Chriſt*'s miracles to Writing, that men might believe on *Him*. But now had Mr. *S.* been at his elbow, he would have adviſed him to ſpare his labour, and would have given him this good reaſon for it; becauſe when he had written his Book, no body would be able to find the certain ſenſe of it without oral Tradition, and that alone would ſecurely and intelligibly convey both the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the certain knowledge of thoſe miracles which he wrought for the confirmation of it. If theſe four things be but granted, I ſee not why, when we ſay that the Scriptures are the means of conveying to us Chriſt's Doctrine, we may not be allow'd to underſtand by the Scriptures, a Book which doth in plain and intelligible words expreſs to us this Doctrine.

* Luke 1. 3, 4.

* John 20. 31.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Mr. S's Exceptions againſt Scripture examined.

§ 1. AND now, although this might have been a ſufficient Anſwer to his Exceptions againſt the Scriptures, as being incapable of the Properties of a *Rule of Faith*; becauſe all of them ſuppoſe that which is apparently falſe and abſurd, as granted by Proteſtants, *viz.* That the Scriptures are onely an heap of dead letters, and inſignificant characters, without any ſenſe under them; and that oral Tradition is that onely which gives them life and ſenſe; Yet becauſe ſeveral of his Exceptions pretend to ſhew, that the true Properties of a Rule of Faith do not at all appertain to the Scriptures; therefore I ſhall give particular Anſwers to them; and as I go along, ſhew that Tradition is liable to all or moſt of thoſe Exceptions, and to far greater than thoſe.

* Pag. 13.

§ 2. Whereas he ſays, * it cannot be evident to Proteſtants, from their Principles, that the Books of Scripture were originally written by men divinely inſpired; I will ſhew him that it may, and then anſwer the reaſons of this Exception.

It is evident, from an univerſal, conſtant, and uncontrolled Tradition among Chriſtians, not onely oral, but written, and from the acknowledgment of the greateſt Adverſaries of our Religion, that theſe Books were originally

nally written by the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts. And this is not onely a Proteſtant Principle, but the Principle of all mankind, *That an undoubted Tradition is ſufficient evidence of the Antiquity and Authour of a Book*, and all the extrinſecal Argument that can ordinarily be had of a Book written long ago.

Next, it is evident, that the Apoſtles were men divinely inſpired, *that is*, ſecured from errour and miſtake in the writing of this Doctrine, from the miracles that were wrought for the confirmation of it. Becauſe it is unreaſonable to imagine that the Divine power ſhould ſo remarkably interpoſe for the confirmation of a Doctrine, and give ſo eminent an atteſtation to the Apoſtles to convince the World, that they were immediately appointed and commiſſioned by God, and yet not ſecure them from errour in the delivery of it. And that ſuch miracles were wrought, is evident from as credible Hiſtories as we have for any of thoſe things which we do moſt firmly believe. And this is better evidence that the Apoſtles were men divinely inſpired, than bare oral Tradition can furniſh us withall. For ſetting aſide the authentick relation of theſe matters in Books, it is moſt probable, that oral Tradition of it ſelf and without Books, would ſcarce have preſerved the memory of any of thoſe particular miracles of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, which are recorded in Scripture. And for the probability

of

of this, I offer theſe two things to his conſideration.

Firſt, No man can deny that memorable perſons have lived, and actions been done in the world innumerable, whereof no Hiſtory now extant makes any mention.

Secondly, He himſelf will grant, that our Saviour wrought innumerable more miracles, than are recorded in Scripture. And now I challenge him to ſhew the ſingle virtue of Oral Tradition, by giving an account of any of thoſe perſons, or their actions, who lived 1500 or 2000 years ago, beſides thoſe which are mentioned in Books; or to give a catalogue but of ten of thoſe innumerable miracles wrought by our Saviour, which are not recorded by the Evangeliſts, with circumſtances as punctual and particular as thoſe are clothed withall. If he can doe this, it will be a good evidence that Oral Tradition ſingly and by it ſelf can doe ſomething; but if he cannot, 'tis as plain an evidence on the contrary, that if thoſe actions of former times, and thoſe miracles of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, which are recorded in Books had never been written, but entruſted ſolely to Oral Tradition, we ſhould have heard as little of them at this day, as we do of thoſe that were not written.

§ 3. Now to examine his Reaſons for this Exception:

Firſt,

First, He ſaith, * *'tis moſt* manifeſt that this cannot be made evident to the *vulgar*, that Scripture was written by men divinely inſpired. This Reaſon is as eaſily anſwered, by ſaying *'tis moſt manifeſt that it can:* But beſides ſaying ſo, I have ſhewed how it may be made as evident to the vulgar, as other things which they do moſt firmly and upon good grounds believe. Even the rudeſt of the vulgar, and thoſe who cannot read, do believe upon very good grounds that there was ſuch a King as *William the Conqueror*; and the Miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles are capable of as good evidence as we have for this. * P. 13.

Secondly, He ſays, * this cannot be evident to the *curious and moſt ſpeculative Searchers, but by ſo deep an inſpection into the ſenſe of Scripture, as ſhall diſcover ſuch ſecrets, that Philoſophy, and humane Induſtry could never have arrived to.* As if we could not be aſſured that any thing were written by men divinely inſpired, unleſs it were above the reach of humane underſtanding; and as if no man could know that this was our Saviour's Doctrine, *Whatever ye would that men ſhould doe unto you, that doe ye likewiſe unto them*, becauſe every one can underſtand it. But if there were more myſteries in the Scriptures than there are, I hope a man might be ſatisfied that they were written by men divinely inſpired, without a clear comprehenſion of all * P. 13, 14.

all thoſe myſteries. The evidence of the inſpiration of any perſon doth not depend upon the plainneſs or ſublimity of the things revealed to him, but upon the goodneſs of the arguments which tend to perſwade us that the perſon is ſo inſpired: And the Argument that is moſt fit to ſatisfie us of that is, if he work miracles. Now I would gladly know why a learned man cannot be aſſured of a Miracle, *that is*, a plain ſenſible matter of Fact done long ago, but *by ſo deep an inſpection into the ſenſe of Scripture, as ſhall diſcover ſuch ſecrets that Philoſophy and humane Induſtry could never have arrived to.*

* Pag. 14. § 4. *Thirdly*, Becauſe * *all the ſeeming contradictions of Scripture muſt be ſolved, before we can out of the bare letter conclude the Scripture to be of God's enditing; to ſolve which literally, plainly, and ſatisfactorily* (he tells us) *the memory of ſo many particulars, which made them clearer to thoſe of the Age in which they were written, and the matter known, muſt needs be ſo worn out by tract of time, that it is one of the moſt difficult tasks in the World.* As if we could not believe a Book to be of God's enditing, becauſe there ſeem now to be ſome contradictions in it, which we have reaſon to believe could eaſily have been ſolved by thoſe who lived in the Age in which it was written. Or as if Oral Tradition could help a man to ſolve theſe contradictions, when the memory of particulars neceſſary for the clear

clear ſolution of them is (as himſelf confeſſes) worn out by tract of time. If Mr. *S.* can, in order to the ſolution of the ſeeming contradictions of Scripture, *demonſtrate*, that Oral Tradition hath to this day preſerv'd the memory of thoſe particulars (neceſſary for that purpoſe) the memory of which muſt needs be long ſince worn out by tract of time, then I will readily yield, that his Rule of Faith hath in this particular, the advantage of *ours*. But if he cannot doe this, why does he make that an Argument againſt *our* Rule, which is as ſtrong againſt *his own*? This is juſt like Capt. *Everard*'s Friend's way of arguing againſt the *Proteſtants*, That they cannot rely upon Scripture becauſe it is full of plain contradictions, impoſſible to be reconciled; and therefore they ought in all reaſon to ſubmit to the infallibility of the Church. And for an inſtance of ſuch a contradiction, he pitched upon the three *fourteen Generations* mentioned in the firſt of St. *Matthew*, becauſe the third *Series* of Generations, if they be counted, will be found to be but thirteen. Not to mention now, how this difficulty hath been ſufficiently ſatisfied both by Proteſtant and Popiſh Commentators, without any recourſe to *Oral Tradition*; that which I take notice of, is the unreaſonableneſs of making this an Exception againſt the Proteſtants, when it comes with every whit as much force upon themſelves. Suppoſe

this Contradiction not capable of any ſolution by Proteſtants (as he affirms) and I ſhould ſubmit to the infallibility of the Church; can he aſſure me, that infallibility can make Thirteen, Fourteen? If it cannot, how am I nearer ſatisfaction in this point, by acknowledging the infallibility of the Church? The caſe is the very ſame, as to Mr. *S*'s Exception, if I owned Oral Tradition, I ſhould be never the nearer ſolving the ſeeming contradictions of Scripture, and conſequently I could not in *Reaſon conclude it to be of God's enditing.* So that in truth, theſe Exceptions if they were true, would not ſtrike at Proteſtancy, but at Chriſtian Religion; which is the general unhappineſs of moſt of the Popiſh Arguments; than which there is no greater evidence, that the Church of *Rome* is not the true Mother, becauſe ſhe had rather Chriſtianity ſhould be deſtroyed, than it ſhould appear that any other Church hath a claim to it. It was a work very proper for the Heretick *Marcion*, to aſſault Religion this way; who, as *Tertullian* * tells us, writ a whole Book, which he call'd *Antitheſes* wherein he reckoned up all the Contradictions (as he thought) between the Old and New Teſtament: But methinks it is very improper for the Papiſts who pretend to be the onely true Chriſtians in the World, to ſtrain their wits to diſcover as many contradictions as they can in the Scripture, and to prov

* L. 1. contr. Marcion.

prove that there is no way of reconciling them: The natural conſequence of which is, the expoſing of this *ſacred Inſtrument of our Religion*, and even *Chriſtianity* it ſelf, to the ſcorn of Atheiſts. Therefore, to be very plain with Mr. *S.* and Captain *Everard*, I am heartily ſorry to ſee, that one of the chief fruits oftheir Converſion is to abuſe the Bible.

§ 5. *Secondly*, He ſays * that Proteſtants cannot know *how many* the Books of Scripture *ought to be*, and *which of the many controverted ones may be ſecurely put in that Catalogue, which not*; This he proves, by ſaying, *'tis moſt palpable, that few, or at leaſt the rude vulgar, can never be aſſured of it.* And if this be a good Argument, this again is a good Anſwer, to ſay it is not moſt palpable. But I ſhall deal more liberally, and tell him, that we know that juſt ſo many ought to be received as uncontroverted Books, concerning which, it cannot be ſhewn there was ever any Controverſie; and ſo many as controverted, concerning which it appears that Queſtion hath been made: And if thoſe which have been controverted, have been ſince received by thoſe Churches which once doubted of them, there is now no farther doubt concerning them, becauſe the Controverſie about them is at an end. And now I would fain know, what greater certainty Oral Tradition can give us of the true Catalogue of the Books of Scripture. For it muſt

* P. 14.

either acknowledge ſome Books have been controverted, or not; if not, why doth he make a ſuppoſition of controverted Books? If Oral Tradition acknowledge ſome to have been controverted, then it cannot aſſure us that they have not been controverted; nor conſequently, that they ought to be received as never having been controverted; but only as ſuch, concerning which thoſe Churches who did once raiſe a Controverſie about them, have been ſince ſatisfied that they are Canonical. The Traditionary Church *now* receives the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* as Canonical. I ask, Do they receive it as ever delivered for ſuch? That they muſt, if they receive it from Oral Tradition, which conveys things to them under this notion, as ever delivered; and yet St. *Hierom* ſpeaking, (not as a *Speculator*, but a *Teſtifier*) ſaith expreſly of it, * *That the cuſtom of the Latin Church doth not receive it among the Canonical Scriptures.* What ſaith Mr. *S.* to this? It is clear from this Teſtimony, that the *Roman* Church in St. *Hierom*'s time, did not acknowledge this *Epiſtle* for Canonical; and 'tis as plain that the preſent *Roman* Church doth receive it for Canonical. Where is then the *infallibility* of *Oral Tradition?* How does the *living voice of the preſent Church* aſſure us, that what Books are now received by her were ever received by her? And if it cannot doe this, but the matter muſt come to be tryed by

* Com. in Eſai. c. 6, & c. 8.

by the beſt Records of former Ages, (which the Proteſtants are willing to have the Catalogue tried by) then it ſeems the Proteſtants have a better way to know what Books are Cononical, than is the infallible way of oral Tradition; and ſo long as 'tis better, no matter though it be not called Infallible.

§ 6. *Thirdly*, He ſays * the Proteſtants cannot know, *that the very Original, or a perfectly true copy of theſe Books hath been preſerved.* It is not neceſſary that they ſhould know either of theſe, it is ſufficient that they know, that thoſe copies which they have, are not materially corrupted in any matter of Faith or Practice; and that they have ſufficient aſſurance of this, I have already ſhewn. And how doth he prove the contrary? By his uſual Argument, with ſaying *it is manifeſtly impoſſible.* But how do the Church of *Rome* know that they have perfectly true copies of the Scriptures, in the Original Languages? They do not pretend to know this; the learned men of that Church acknowledge the various Readings as well as we, and do not pretend to know otherwiſe than by probable conjecture, (as we alſo may do) which of thoſe Readings is the true one. And why ſhould it be more neceſſary for us to know this, than for them? If they think it reaſonable to content themſelves with knowing, that no material corruptions have crept into thoſe Books, ſo may

* P. 15.

we. And that there have not, we know by better Arguments than oral Tradition, even by the aſſurance we have of God's vigilant providence; and from a moral impoſſibility in the thing, that a Book ſo univerſally diſperſed, and tranſlated into ſo many Languages, and conſtantly read in the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, ſhould have been materially corrupted, ſo as that all thoſe copies and tranſlations ſhould have agreed in thoſe corruptions. And this reaſon St. *Auſtin* * gives of the preſervation of the Scriptures entire rather than any other Book. If Mr. *S.* likes it not, he may call St. *Auſtin* to account for it.

* Ep. 48.

* P. 15. § 7. *Fourthly*, He ſays *, the Proteſtants, *at leaſt the rudeſt vulgar*, can have no aſſurance *that thoſe Books are rightly tranſlated*, becauſe they cannot be aſſured either of the ability or integrity of Tranſlators.

* P. 16, 17. *Fifthly*, Nor *can they* (ſays * he) *be aſſured, That the Tranſcribers, and Printers, and Correctors* of the Preſs have carefully and faithfully done their part, in Tranſcribing and Printing the ſeveral Copies and Tranſlations of Scripture aright: Becauſe, *they onely can have evidence of the right letter of Scripture, who ſtood at their elbows attentively watching they ſhould not err in making it perfectly like a former Copy; and even then, why might they not miſtruſt their own eyes and aptneſs to overſee?* I put theſe two exceptions together, becauſe the ſame Anſwer will

will ſerve them both. The grounds of theſe Exceptions, if they have any, are theſe: That no man is to be truſted, either for his skill, or honeſty. And, that it is dangerous for men to truſt their own eyes. Unleſs both theſe be true, theſe Exceptions are of no force: For if we can be aſſured, that other men have ſufficient skill in any thing which we our ſelves do not ſufficiently underſtand, we may be aſſured, that thoſe who tranſlated the Bible had skill in the Original Languages; becauſe very credible perſons tell us ſo; and we have no reaſon to doubt their teſtimony in this particular, more than in any other matter. So that if we can have ſufficient aſſurance of mens integrity in any thing, we have no reaſon to doubt of the skill of Tranſlators, or Tranſcribers, or Printers. And if we can have no aſſurance of mens integrity in any thing, then no man can be aſſured that there was ſuch a man as *Henry* the *Eighth*; and yet I hope the Church of *Rome* makes no doubt of it: Nor can any man be aſſured there is ſuch a City as *Rome*, who hath not ſeen it; nay, if he have *, *why may he not miſtruſt his own eyes*? And which is the ſaddeſt inconvenience of all, if no body be to be truſted, nor *mens own eyes*, (and for the ſame reaſon, ſure not their *ears*) what becomes of the Infallibility of *oral and practical Tradition*? Which neceſſarily ſuppoſeth a competent underſtand-

* P. 16.

derſtanding, a faithfull memory, an honeſt mind, in the generality of thoſe who delivered Chriſt's Doctrine down to us: And by what means ſoever a man can be aſſured of theſe, by the ſame he may much more eaſily be aſſured of the ability and integrity of Tranſlators, Tranſcribers, and Printers. But above all, it ſuppoſeth that mens *ears* and *eyes* cannot deceive them in thoſe things which they are taught, and ſee practiſed.

Is it not very pretty to ſee what pitifull ſhifts men that ſerve an *Hypotheſis* are put to? When to maintain *Infallibility* they are forced to run to the *extremities of Scepticiſm*; and to defend the certainty of oral Tradition, (which depends upon the certainty of mens ſenſes, and an aſſurance of the ability and integrity of thoſe who were dead 1500 years before we were born) are glad to take refuge in Principles quite contrary; ſuch as theſe, That we can have no aſſurance, but that whole Profeſſions of men * *might hap to be Knaves*; that we can have no ſufficient evidence that any man made his *Copy perfectly like the former*, unleſs * *we ſtood at his elbow, attentively watching him:* Nay, and if we did ſo, we have ſtill reaſon to diſtruſt our ſenſes. In ſhort, all humane Faith ſuppoſeth honeſty among men; and that for matters of Fact, and plain objects of ſenſe, the general and uncontrolled teſtimony of mankind is

* P 16.

* P. 16.

to

to be credited; and for matters of peculiar skill and knowledge, that the generality of thoſe who are accounted skilfull in that kind, are to be relied upon: For, as *Ariſtotle* well obſerves, there is no greater ſign of an *undiſciplin'd wit* (or, to uſe one of Mr. *S*'s fine phraſes *, of a man *not acquainted with the paths of Science*) than to expect greater evidence for things than they are capable of. Every man hath reaſon to be aſſured of a thing which is capable of ſufficient evidence, when he hath as much evidence for it as the nature of that thing will bear, and as the capacity he is in will permit him to have. And, as Mr. *White* ſays well * *Satisfaction is to be given to every one according to his capacity; it is ſufficient for a Child to believe his Parents; for a Clown to believe his Preacher.* And this is univerſally true in all caſes, where we have not better or equal evidence to the contrary. But ſuch is the unhappineſs of the Popiſh Doctrines, that if people were permitted the free uſe of the Scripture, they would eaſily diſcern them to have no probable foundation in it, and to be plainly contrary to it; ſo that it cannot be ſafe for their Preachers to tell the people that the Scripture is the onely *Rule of Faith*, leſt they ſhould find cauſe not to believe them, when they teach Doctrines ſo plainly contrary to that Rule.

Preface.

* Anſw. to the Lord *Falkland*. P. 33.

§ 8.

* P. 17. § 8. *Laſtly*, He ſays *, the Proteſtants cannot be *certain of the true ſenſe of Scripture*. Does he mean of plain Texts, or obſcure ones? Of the true ſenſe of plain Texts, I hope every one may be certain; and for obſcure ones, it is not neceſſary every one ſhould. But it may be there are no plain Texts in the Scriptures; then the reaſon of it muſt be (till Mr. *S.* can ſhew a better) either becauſe it is impoſſible for any one to write plainly; or becauſe God cannot write ſo plainly as men; or becauſe we have good reaſon to think that he would not write things neceſſary for every one to believe, ſo as men might clearly underſtand him.

* P. 17. But he tells us, * *The numerous Comments upon Scripture* are an evidence that no man can be certain of the true ſenſe of it. I hope not; for if thoſe numerous Commentators do generally agree in the ſenſe of *plain* Texts (as 'tis certain they do) then this Argument ſignifies nothing as to ſuch Texts: And as for thoſe which are *obſcure*, let Commentators differ about them as much as they pleaſe, ſo long as all neceſſary Points of Faith and matters of Practice are delivered in plain Texts. He adds *, * P. 17. *There are infinite diſputes about the ſenſe of Scripture, even in moſt concerning Points, as in that of Chriſt's Divinity.* But are not Commentators, both Proteſtant and Popiſh, generally agreed about the ſenſe of Scripture

Scripture in that Point? and what if ſome out of prejudice do miſtake, or out of perverſeneſs do wreſt the plaineſt Texts of Scripture for the Divinity of Chriſt, to another ſenſe? Is this any argument that thoſe Texts are not ſufficiently plain? Can any thing be ſpoken or written in words ſo clear from ambiguity, which a perverſe or prejudiced mind ſhall not be able to vex and force to another meaning? God did not write the Scriptures for the froward and the captious, but for thoſe who will read them with a free and unprejudiced mind, and are willing to come to the knowledge of the Truth. If Mr. *S.* had been converſant in the writings of the Fathers, he could not but have taken notice with what confidence they attempted to prove the Divinity of Chriſt out of Scripture, as if that did afford convincing arguments for this purpoſe. St. *Chryſoſtome* * profeſſes to demonſtrate out of Scripture, *That the Son is of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father*; and relies upon Scripture alone for this, without mentioning any other kind of Argument. So that it ſeems, St. *Chryſoſtome* was not acquainted with the inſufficiency of Scripture for the conviction of Hereticks in this Point; and that *he* was either ignorant of the (*infallible*) way of demonſtrating this point from Oral Tradition, or had no great opinion of it. The ſame *Father* elſewhere *, arguing againſt Hereticks about the

* Hom. 32. de Conſubſtant.

* Hom. 7. de Sancto *Phoca.*

the Divinity of Chriſt, ſays, *That they pervert the Scriptures, to ſtrengthen their Hereſie from thence.* But then he does not (with Mr. *S.*) blame the Scripture, and ſay that this Doctrine is not there deliver'd with ſufficient clearneſs; but contrarywiſe he ſays, *That the Scripture is clear enough, but the corrupt minds of Hereticks will not ſee what is there contain'd.* Had St. *Chryſoſtome* been a true ſon of the Traditionary Church, he would have laid hold of this occaſion, to vilifie the Scriptures, and to ſhew the neceſſity of regulating of our Faith not by ſuch uncertain *Records*, but by the infallible *Reports* of Oral Tradition.

§ 9. But becauſe Mr. *S.* lays great weight (in ſeveral parts of his Book) upon this Exception againſt Scripture, *viz. That Proteſtants cannot be certain of the true ſenſe of it:* Therefore I ſhall not content my ſelf, onely to have ſhewn that we may be ſufficiently certain of the ſenſe of Scripture, ſo far as to underſtand all neceſſary matters of Faith and Practice, and that more than this is not neceſſary; but ſhall likewiſe return this Exception upon him by enquiring into theſe two things.

1. How the Traditionary Church can be more certain of the true ſenſe of Scripture than the Proteſtants?

2. How

2. How they can be more certain of the true ſenſe of Tradition, than Proteſtants of the true ſenſe of Scripture?

1. How the *Traditionary Church* can be more certain of the true ſenſe of Scripture, than *Proteſtants? They* pretend to have an Oral Tradition of the true ſenſe of it, delivered dõwn from Father to Son. But this onely reacheth to thoſe Texts, which are coincident with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine; as for all other parts of Scripture, they are as uſeleſs to Papiſts, as they ſuppoſe they are to us; becauſe wanting the help of Oral Tradition, they cannot be certain of one tittle of them. And as for thoſe Texts, the ſenſe whereof is conveyed down by Oral Tradition; this ſenſe is, I hope, delivered in ſome words or other; And have all Preachers, and Fathers, and Mothers, and Nurſes, the faculty of delivering this ſenſe in words ſo plain as cannot poſſibly be miſtaken or wreſted to another ſenſe? I am ſorry that when every one hath this faculty of ſpeaking their thoughts plainly, the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be repreſented as not able to convey his mind to men in intelligible words. And does not his own Objection rebound upon himſelf? If the Church have a certain ſenſe of Scripture orally delivered, whence are the numerous Comments of the Fathers upon it and of later Writers of their Church, and the infinite Diſputes about the ſenſe of it, in the

the moſt concerning Points? *viz. The efficacy of God's grace, the Supremacy of St.* Peter, *the infallibility of a Pope and Council by immediate aſſiſtence of the Holy Ghoſt?* What a ſtir is made about the ſenſe of *Dabo tibi Claves, Tu es Petrus, & ſuper hanc Petram,* &c. *Paſce oves?* Do not they differ about the meaning of theſe Texts among themſelves, as much as they do from the Fathers, and from the Proteſtants? Some underſtanding them of St. *Peter's* Supremacy onely; others of his infallibility; others of his infallibility onely in and with a general Council; which yet others do not allow to Pope or Council, from any immediate aſſiſtence, but onely from the rational force of Tradition, ſuppoſing that the Pope and Council hold to it. If oral Tradition have brought down a certain ſenſe of theſe Texts, why do they not produce it, and agree in it? If it have not (to uſe a hot phraſe of his own*) *'tis perfect phrenzy to ſay they can be certain of the true ſenſe of Scripture.*

* P. 17.

If he ſay, they are by tradition made certain of the true ſenſe of Scripture, *ſo far as it concerns the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine,* and do all agree in it, and that is ſufficient; then I ask him, What are thoſe points of Faith which make up the body of Chriſtian Doctrine? He will tell me, they are thoſe which all Catholicks agree to have deſcended to them from the Apoſtles by a conſtant and uninterrupted

uninterrupted Tradition. I enquire farther, how I ſhall know what is the certain ſenſe of Scripture ſo far as it concerns theſe points? He muſt anſwer as before, that *that* is the true ſenſe which all Catholicks agree to have deſcended to them by Tradition. Which amounts to this, that *all* Catholicks do agree in the ſenſe of Scripture ſo far as they do *all* agree in it. It is to be hoped, that the Proteſtants (how much ſoever at preſent they differ about the ſenſe of Scripture) may in time come to as good an agreement as this. This brings to my remembrance a paſſage or two of Mr. *Creſſy*; the one in his *Appendix* *, where he tell us, *That as it is impoſſible that Hereticks ſhould agree any other way than in Faction; ſo it is impoſſible that Catholicks ſhould differ in points of Faith.* Why ſo? Were not thoſe Catholicks firſt, who afterwards became Hereticks; and when they became ſo, did they not differ in points of Belief? Yes; but here lies the conceit, when they began to differ, then they ceas'd to be Catholicks; therefore Catholicks can never differ in points of Faith. The other paſſage is where he ſays *, That he *hath forſaken a Church where Unity was impoſſible*, &c. *and betaken himſelf to a Church where Schiſm is impoſſible.* This laſt Clauſe, *That Schiſm is impoſſible in their Church*, cannot poſſibly be true but in the ſame abſurd and ludicrous ſenſe, in which it is impoſſible for Catholicks

* Exomolog. 2d. Edit. p. 554.

* Exomolog. c. 53. Sect. 2.

licks to differ in points of Belief. For he cannot deny, but that it is poſſible for men to break off from the Communion of their Church, which in his ſenſe is Schiſm; but here is the ſubtilty of it, No Schiſmatick is of their Church, becauſe ſo ſoon as he is a Schiſmatick he is out of it; therefore Schiſm is impoſſible in their Church. And is it not as impoſſible in the Church of *England*? Where Mr. *Cr.* might have done well to have continued, till he could have given a wiſer reaſon of forſaking Her.

§ 10. But to return to our purpoſe. Mr. *Ruſhworth* * acknowledgeth, that the Scripture is of it ſelf ſufficiently plain, as to matters of practice; for he asks, *Who is ſo blind, as not to ſee that theſe things are to be found in Scripture by a ſenſible, common, and diſcreet reading of it; though perhaps by a rigorous and exact balancing of every particular word and ſyllable, any of theſe things would vaniſh away we know not how?* So that for the direction of our lives and actions, *he* confeſſeth the Scripture to be ſufficiently plain, if men will but read it *ſenſibly* and *diſcreetly*; and (*he* ſays) that he is blind that does not ſee this. But who ſo blind as he that *will* not ſee, that the ſenſe of Scripture is as plain in all neceſſary points of Faith? I am ſure St. *Auſtin* makes no difference, when he tells us *, That *in thoſe things which are plainly ſet down in Scripture, we may find all thoſe things*

* Dial. 2. Sect. 12.

* De Doctr. Chriſt. L. 2.

in

in which Faith and Manners of life are comprehended. And why cannot men, in reference to matters of Faith as well as of Practice, read the Scriptures *ſenſibly* and *diſcreetly* without ſuch a *rigorous balancing of every word and ſyllable*, as will make the ſenſe *vaniſh away we know not how*? If the Scripture be but ſufficiently plain to ſuch as will uſe it *ſenſibly and diſcreetly*, I do not underſtand what greater plainneſs can be deſir'd in a Rule: Nor can I imagine what kind of Rule it muſt be that can be unexceptionably plain to captious Cavillers, and ſuch as are bent to play the fool with it.

Well, ſuppoſe the Scripture be not ſufficiently clear as to matters of Faith: and hereupon I have recourſe to the Church for the true ſenſe of Scripture: Muſt I believe the Churches ſenſe to be the true ſenſe of ſuch a Text, though I ſee it to be plainly contrary to the genuine ſenſe of the words? yes, that I muſt, or elſe I make my ſelf and not the Church judge of the ſenſe of Scripture, which is the grand Hereſie of the Proteſtants. But then I muſt not ſuppoſe, much leſs believe, that the Churches ſenſe of ſuch a Text is contrary to the genuine meaning of it; no, although I plainly ſee it to be ſo: This is hard again on the other hand; eſpecially if that be true which is acknowledged both by Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Creſſy*, *viz.* That though general Councils

cannot miſtake in the Points of Faith which they decree, yet they may miſtake in the confirmation of them from Texts of Scripture, that is, they may be miſtaken about the ſenſe of thoſe Texts. And if Mr. *S.* think his Brethren have granted too much, he may ſee this exemplified in the ſecond Council of *Nice* (to mention no other) which, to eſtabliſh their Doctrine of Image-worſhip, does ſo palpably abuſe and wreſt Texts of Scripture, that I can hardly believe that any Papiſt in the World hath the forehead to own that for the true ſenſe of thoſe Texts which is there given by thoſe Fathers.

§ 11. *Secondly*, How the Traditionary Church can be more certain of the true ſenſe of their Traditional Doctrines, than the Proteſtants can be of the true ſenſe of Scripture? And this is worthy our enquiry, becauſe if the buſineſs be ſearch'd to the bottom, it will appear (beſides all other inconveniences, which oral Tradition is much more liable to than Scripture) that the certain ſenſe and meaning of Traditional Doctrine is as hard to come at as the ſenſe of Scripture. And this I will make appear by neceſſary conſequence from their own Conceſſions. Mr. *White*, and Mr. *S.* ſay that the great ſecurity of Tradition is this, that it is not tied to certain phraſes, and ſet-forms of expreſſion, but the ſame ſenſe is conveyed and ſetled in mens hearts by various expreſ-

ſions.

ſions. But according to Mr. *Ruſhworth*, this renders Tradition's ſenſe uncertain; for *he* ſays*, *'Tis impoſſible to put fully, and beyond all quarrel, the ſame ſenſe in divers words.* So that if men do not receive Tradition in a *ſenſible, common, diſcreet* way (as Mr. *Ruſhw.* ſpeaks concerning reading the Scriptures) but will come to *a rigorous and exact balancing of every particular phraſe, word and ſyllable*, the ſenſe of Tradition will be in the very ſame danger of uncertainty, and be liable *to vaniſh we know not how.* Dr. *Holden* * lays down theſe two Principles. Firſt, *That no truth can be conveyed down from man to man but by ſpeech; and ſpeech cannot be but by words; and all words are either equivocal in themſelves, or liable to be differently underſtood by ſeveral perſons.* Secondly, *That ſuch is the frame of man's mind, that the ſame truths may be differently apprehended and underſtood by different perſons.* And if this be true, then Traditional Doctrines, if they be delivered by ſpeech and words, will be liable to uncertainties and ambiguities as to their ſenſe, as well as Scripture. Mr. *Creſſy* * tells us, *That Reaſon and Experience ſhew, that differences will ariſe even about the Writings of the Fathers, and any thing but the Teſtimony of the preſent Church.* If this be true, Tradition wholly falls into uncertainty. For if difference will ariſe about *the Writings of the Fathers* how they

* Dial. 2. Sect. 6.

* Analyſ. Fidei. L. 1. c. 9.

* Append. c. 6.

are to be interpreted, I ſuppoſe the Writings of Councils will be liable to the ſame inconvenience: And if the whole preſent Church cannot declare her ſenſe of any Traditional Doctrine otherwiſe than by a Council, (unleſs with the Jeſuites they will epitomize the Church into the Pope,) and the Decrees of a Council cannot be univerſally diſpers'd (or at leaſt never uſe to be) but by Writing: And if Differences will ariſe about the interpretation of *that Writing*, as well as any other; then this *preſent infallible Authority* (which Mr. *Creſſy* magnifies ſo much for ending Differences) leaves all Controverſies ariſing about the ſenſe of Tradition, as indeterminable as ever; and they muſt for ever remain ſo, till general Councils have got the knack of penning their Decrees in words which will ſo infallibly expreſs their meaning to the moſt captious Caviller, that no difference can poſſibly ariſe about the interpretation of them; or elſe (which will be more ſutable to this wiſe *Hypotheſis*) till general Councils (being convinc'd by Mr. *S*'s *Demonſtrations*) ſhall come to underſtand themſelves ſo well, as not to entruſt their Decrees any more to the *uncertain* way of *Writing*, but for the future to communicate them to the World by the *infallible* way of *oral Tradition*. And to mention no more, Mr. *Knott* *, (who agrees with the other thus far, that the certain ſenſe of Scrip-

* Anſw. to *Chilling.* c. 2. Sect. 6.

Scripture is onely to be had from the Church) ſpeaks to this purpoſe, That before we can be certain that this is the true ſenſe of ſuch a Text, we muſt either be certain that this Text is capable of no other ſenſe, as *Figurative, Myſtical,* or *Moral;* or if it be, we muſt have *ſome certain and infallible means to know in which of them it is taken, which can be known onely by revelation.* If this be true, then by a fair parity of reaſon, before I can be certain that this is the ſenſe of a Doctrinal Tradition delivered down to me, I muſt either be certain that the words, in which this Tradition was expreſſed when it was delivered to me, are capable of no other ſenſe (as Figurative, Myſtical, or Moral) beſides that in which I underſtood them; or if they be (as certainly they will be) capable of any of theſe other ſenſes, then muſt I have ſome certain and infallible means whereby to know in which of theſe they are taken: And this can no more be known without a revelation, than which is the true ſenſe of ſuch a Text of Scripture. If it be ſaid, that the ſenſe of a Traditional Doctrine may by different expreſſions be ſtill farther and farther explained to me till I come certainly to underſtand the ſenſe of it; this will not help the matter: For if theſe kinds of cavils be good, that a man cannot be certain of the meaning of any words, till he can by an infallible argument demonſtrate either that they

cannot be taken, or that they are not taken in any other ſenſe; I ſay, if this cavil will hold, then every new expreſſion whereby any one ſhall endeavour to explain any Traditional Doctrine, is liable to the ſame inconvenience which thoſe words in which it was firſt delivered to me were liable to. From all which is evident, that the Traditionary Church can be no more certain of the ſenſe of their Traditional Doctrines, than Proteſtants may be of the ſenſe of Scripture.

§ 12. Theſe are his Exceptions contained in his ſecond *Diſcourſe*; and of what force they are, hath been examined. But becauſe he foreſaw that it might be replied that theſe defects might in part be provided againſt *by Hiſtory, by the Providence of God, by Teſtimonies of Councils and Fathers, and by the ſufficient clearneſs of Scripture as to Fundamentals*; *He* endeavours to ſhew that theſe ſignifie little to this purpoſe.

* P. 17, 18. *Firſt*, Not *Hiſtory* *; *becauſe few are skilled in Hiſtory, and they that are not, cannot ſafely rely upon thoſe that are skill'd, unleſs they knew certainly that the Hiſtorians whom they rely on had ſecure grounds, and not bare hear-ſay for what they writ, and that they were not contradicted by others either extant, or periſhed.* How much credit is to be given to uncontrolled Hiſtory by the learned, and how much by the vulgar to men of skill,

I have

I have already ſhewn. I ſhall onely add now, that if this reaſoning be true, it is impoſſible for any man to be certain by Hiſtory of any ancient matter of Fact, as *namely* that there were ſuch perſons as *Julius Cæſar*, and *William the Conquerour*, and that they invaded and conquered *England*, becauſe (according to him) we cannot know certainly that the Hiſtorians, who relate theſe things, and upon whoſe authority we rely, *had ſecure grounds, and not bare hearſay for what they writ: And that they were non contradicted by others either extant or periſhed*, is, I am ſure, impoſſible for any man to know: For who can tell now what was contained in thoſe Books which are periſhed? So that if this be requiſite, to make every Hiſtorical Relation credible, to know certainly that it was not contradicted by any of thoſe Books which we do not know what they were, nor what was in them, we can have no certainty of any ancient Fact or Hiſtory; for who knows certainly that ſome Books that are periſhed did not contradict whatever is written in Books that are extant? Nay, if this reaſoning hold, we can have no certainty of any thing conveyed by oral Tradition. For what though the Prieſt tell me this was the Doctrine of Chriſt delivered to him? unleſs I know that all others agree with him in this Tradition, I cannot rely upon his teſtimony: Nor

* Answ. to *Chilling.* c. 1. Sect. 33.

then neither in Mr. *Knott*'s * opinion, because *the testimony of Preachers or Pastours is humane and fallible*; unless (according to his *Jargon*) a *conclusion*, deduced from *Premisses*, one of which is onely *probable*, *and may be sufficient to bring our understanding to an infallible act of Faith*, viz. *if such a conclusion be taken Specificative*; whereas, if it be taken *Reduplicative*, *as it is a conclusion*, *it can onely beget a probable assent*; which is to say, that considered barely as a conclusion, and so far as in reason it can deserve assent, it is onely probable; but considered as it serves an *Hypothesis*, and is convenient to be believed with reason or without, so it is infallible. But to carry the supposition farther, put the case, that the whole present Age assembled in a general Council, should declare that such a Point was delivered to them: yet (according to Mr. *S.*) we cannot safely rely upon this, unless we knew certainly, that those whom they relied on *had secure grounds*, *and not bare hearsay for what they delivered*, *and that they were not contradicted* within the space of 1500. years *by any of those that are dead*; which it is impossible for any one now to know.

But to shew how inconsistent he is with himself in these matters, I will present the Reader with *a passage* or *two* in another part of his Book; where he endeavours to prove that men may safely rely on a general and uncon-

uncontrolled Tradition. He tells us *, *That the common course of humane Conversation makes a madness not to believe great multitudes of knowers, if no possible considerations can awaken in our reason a doubt that they conspire to deceive us.* And a little after *, *Nor can any, unless their brains rove wildly, or be unsetled even to the degree of madness, suspect deceit where such multitudes agree unanimously in a matter of Fact.* Now if men be but supposed to write, as well as to speak, what they know, and to agree in their Writings about matter of Fact; then it will be the same *madness not to believe multitudes* of Historians, *where no possible consideration can awaken in our reason a doubt that they have conspired to deceive us; and mens brains must rove wildly and be unsetled even to the degree of phrenzy, who suspect deceit where such multitudes unanimously agree in a matter of Fact.* And this seems to me to be the great unhappiness of Mr. *S*'s Demonstrations, that they proceed upon contradictory Principles; so that in order to the demonstrating of the uncertainty of Books and Writings, he must suppose all those Principles to be uncertain, which he takes to be self-evident and unquestionable when he is to demonstrate the Infallibility of Oral Tradition.

* P. 49.

Ibid.

§ 13. *Secondly*, He tells us *, the *Providence of God* is no security against those contin-

* P. 18.

contingencies the Scripture are ſubject to; becauſe we cannot be certain of Divine Providence or aſſiſtence to his Church, *but by Letter of Scripture*; therefore that muſt firſt be proved *certain, before we mention the Church, or God's aſſiſtence to her.* As if we pretended there were any promiſe in Scripture that God would preſerve the Letter of it entire and uncorrupted, or as if we could not otherwiſe be aſſured of it; as if the light of natural Reaſon could not aſſure us of God's Providence in general, and of his more eſpecial care of thoſe things which are of greateſt concernment to us, ſuch as this is, That a Book containing the method and the terms of Salvation ſhould be preſerved from any material corruption. He might as well have ſaid, That without the Letter of Scripture we cannot know that there is a God.

* P. 18, 19. § 14. *Thirdly*, Nor (ſays he *) can Teſtimonies of *Councils and Fathers* be ſufficient Interpreters of Scripture. We do not ſay they are. Our Principle is, that the Scripture doth ſufficiently interpret it ſelf, that is, is plain to all capacities, in things neceſſary to be believed and practiſed. And the general conſent of Fathers in this doctrine of the ſufficient plainneſs of Scripture (which I ſhall afterwards ſhew) is a good evidence againſt them. As for obſcure and more doubtfull Texts, we acknowledge the Comments

Comments of the *Fathers* to be a good help, but no certain Rule of interpretation. And that the Papiſts think ſo, as well as we, is plain; inaſmuch as they acknowledge the Fathers to differ among themſelves in the interpretation of ſeveral Texts: And nothing is more familiar in all Popiſh Commentators, than to differ from the ancient Fathers about the ſenſe of Scripture. And as for *Councils*. Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Creſſy* (as I ſaid before) do not think it neceſſary to believe that always to be the true ſenſe of Texts which Councils give of them, when they bring them to confirm Points of Faith. Nay, if any Controverſie ariſe about the ſenſe of any Text of Scripture, it is impoſſible (according to Mr. *Ruſhworth*'s Principles) for a Council to decide either that, or any other Controverſie, for *he* * makes it his buſineſs to prove, That Controverſies cannot be *decided by words*; and if this be ſo, then they cannot be decided at all, unleſs he can prove that they may be decided *without words*, and conſequently that Councils may doe their work beſt in the *Quakers* way, by *ſilent Meetings*.

* Dial. 2. Sect. 8.

§ 15. *Fourthly*, Nor can (ſays he *) the *clearneſs of Scripture as to Fundamentals*, be any help againſt theſe defects. Why not?

* P. 20, 21.

Firſt, Becauſe *a certain Catalogue of Fundamentals was never given and agreed to by ſufficient Authority, and yet without this all*

goes

goes to wrack. I hope not, ſo long as we are ſure that God would make nothing neceſſary to be believed but what he hath made plain; and ſo long as men do believe all things that are plainly revealed (which is every one's fault if he do not) men may doe well enough without a preciſe Catalogue. But ſuppoſe we ſay, That the Articles of the Apoſtles Creed contain all neceſſary matters of ſimple belief, what hath Mr. *S.* to ſay againſt this? I am ſure the *Roman Catechiſm*, ſet forth by the Decree of the *Council of Trent*, ſays * as much as this comes to, *viz. That the Apoſtles having received a command to preach the Goſpel to every creature, thought fit to compoſe a form of Chriſtian Faith, namely to this end, that they might all think and ſpeak the ſame things, and that there might be no Schiſms among thoſe whom they had called to the unity of Faith, but that they might all be perfect in the ſame ſenſe, and the ſame opinion: And this Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith and Hope, ſo fram'd by them, the Apoſtles called the Symbol or Creed.* Now how this end, of bringing men to unity of Faith, and making them perfectly of the ſame ſenſe and opinion, could probably be attained by means of the Creed, if it did not contain all neceſſary Points of ſimple belief, I can by no means underſtand. Beſides, a certain catalogue of Fundamentals is as neceſſary for them as for us;

* Præfat.

us; and when Mr. *S.* gives in his, ours is ready. Mr. *Chillingworth* had a great deſire to have ſeen Mr. *Knott*'s catalogue of Fundamentals, and challenged him to produce it, and offered him very fairly, that when ever he might with one hand receive his, he would with the other deliver his own: But Mr. *Knott*, though he ſtill perſiſted in the ſame demand, could never be prevailed with to bring forth his own, but kept it for a ſecret to his dying day. But to put a final ſtop to this *Canting demand of a Catalogue of Fundamentals* (which yet I perceive I ſhall never be able to doe, becauſe it is one of thoſe expletive Topicks which Popiſh Writers, eſpecially thoſe of the loweſt Form, do generally make uſe of to help out a Book) however to doe what I can towards the ſtopping of it, I deſire Mr. *S.* to anſwer the reaſons whereby his Friend Dr. *Holden* * ſhews the unreaſonableneſs of this demand, and likewiſe endeavours to prove that ſuch a *Catalogue* would not onely be *uſeleſs* and *pernicious* if it could be given, but that it is *manifeſtly impoſſible* to give ſuch a preciſe Catalogue.

* Analyſ. Fid. L. 1. c. 4.

Secondly, He asks*, *Is it a Fundamental that Chriſt is God?* If ſo, *Whether this be clearer in Scripture, than that God hath hands, feet, &c.* To which I anſwer by another queſtion; Is it clear that there are Figures in Scripture, and that many things

* P. 21.

are

are ſpoken after the manner of men, and by way of condeſcenſion and accommodation to our capacities; and that cuſtome and common ſenſe teacheth men to diſtinguiſh between things figuratively and properly ſpoken? If ſo, why cannot every one eaſily underſtand, that when the Scripture ſaith *God hath hands and feet*, and that *Chriſt* is *the Vine* and *the Door*, theſe are not to be taken properly, as we take this Propoſition, that Chriſt is God, in which no man hath any reaſon to ſuſpect a Figure? When Mr. S. tells us, That *he percheth upon the ſpecifical nature of things*, would it not offend him, if any one ſhould be ſo ſilly as to conclude from hence that Mr. *S.* believed *himſelf* to be a *Bird*, and *nature* a *Perch*? And yet not onely the Scriptures, but all ſober Writers are free from ſuch forc't and phantaſtical Metaphors. I remember that *Origen* * taxeth *Celſus* his wilfull Ignorance in finding " fault with the Scriptures, for attributing " to God humane affections, as anger, &c. " and tells him, that any one who had a " mind to underſtand the Scriptures, might " eaſily ſee, that ſuch expreſſions were ac- " commodated to *us*, and accordingly to " be underſtood; and that no man, that " will but compare theſe expreſſions with o- " ther paſſages of Scripture, need to fail of " the true ſenſe of them. But (according to Mr. *S.*) *Origen* was to blame to find fault

* L. 4.

fault with *Celſus* for thinking that the Scripture did really attribute humane affections to God; for how could he think otherwiſe, when *the moſt fundamental Point is not clearer in Scripture, than that God hath hands, feet, &c.* How could *Origen* in reaſon expect from *Celſus* (though never ſo great a Philoſopher) that he ſhould be able without the help of Oral Tradition, to diſtinguiſh between what is ſpoken *literally*, and what by a certain *Scheme* of ſpeech? *Theodoret* * tells us of one *Audæus*, who held that God had a humane ſhape, and bodily members; but *he* does not ſay that the reaſon of this Errour was, becauſe he made Scripture the Rule of his Faith, but expreſly becauſe *he was a fool, and did fooliſhly underſtand thoſe things which the Divine Scriptures ſpeak by way of Condeſcenſion.* So that although Mr. *S.* is pleas'd to make this wiſe Objection, yet it ſeems, (according to *Theodoret*) that men do not miſtake ſuch Texts, either for want of oral Tradition, or of ſufficient clearneſs in the Scriptures, but for want of common reaſon and ſenſe. And if Mr. *S.* know of any Rule of Faith that is ſecure from all poſſibility of being miſtaken by fooliſh and perverſe men, I would be glad to be acquainted with it, and with him for its ſake.

* Hæret. Fabul. l. 4.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

That Scripture is a ſufficient Rule to the Unlearned, and to the moſt Rational doubters.

§. 1. IN his next Diſcourſe he endeavours to ſhew, that unlearned Perſons cannot be juſtified as acting rationally in receiving the Scripture for the Word of God, and relying upon it as a certain Rule; becauſe they are not capable of ſatisfaction concerning theſe matters. But I have already ſhewn that they are, and ſhall not repeat the ſame over again. And whereas he ſays *, That *ſeveral Profeſſions all pretend to Scripture*, and yet *differ*, and *damn*, and *perſecute one another* about theſe differences; the anſwer is eaſie: That they all pretend to Scripture, is an argument that they all acknowledge it to be the Word of God, and the *Rule of Faith*: and that they are generally agreed about the ſenſe of thoſe plain Texts which contain the fundamental Points of Faith is evident, in that thoſe ſeveral Profeſſions acknowledge the Articles contained in the Apoſtles Creed to be ſufficiently delivered in Scripture: And if any Profeſſions differ about the meaning of plain Texts, that is not an argument that plain Texts are obſcure, but that ſome men are perverſe. And if thoſe Profeſſions damn and perſecute one another about the meaning of obſcure Texts, the Scripture is not in fault, but thoſe that doe ſo.

* P. 24.

§. 2. And

§. 2. And whereas he pretends*, That the Scripture is not *able to ſatisfie Sceptical diſſenters, and Rational doubters, becauſe nothing under a demonſtration can ſatisfie ſuch perſons ſo well concerning the incorruptedneſs of Originals, the faithfulneſs of Tranſlations*, &c. *but that ſearching and ſincere Wits may ſtill maintain their ground of ſuſpence with A Might it not be otherwiſe?* This hath been anſwered already: partly, by ſhewing that the Scripture was not intended to ſatisfie Scepticks, and that a Demonſtration is not ſufficient to give ſatisfaction to them; and partly, by ſhewing that Rational doubters may have as much ſatisfaction concerning thoſe matters, as the nature of the things will bear; and he is not a Rational doubter that deſires more. *P. 25, 26, 27.

But that he may ſee the unreaſonableneſs of this Diſcourſe, I ſhall briefly ſhew him, That all Mankind do in matters of this nature accept of ſuch evidence as falls ſhort of Demonſtration; and that his great *Friends* and *Maſters* from whom he hath taken the main grounds of his Book (though he manageth them to leſs advantage) do frequently acknowledge, that it is reaſonable for men to acquieſce in ſuch aſſurance as falls ſhort of Infallibility, and ſuch evidence as is leſs than Demonſtration. Do not mankind think themſelves ſufficiently aſſured of the Antiquity and Authors of ſeveral Books, for which they have not Demonſtrative evidence? Doth not

Ariſtotle ſay, that things of a moral and civil nature, and matters of Fact done long ago, are incapable of Demonſtration; and that it is madneſs to expect it for things of this Nature? Are there no paſſages in Books ſo plain, that a man may be ſufficiently ſatisfied that this and no other is the certain ſenſe of them? If there be none, can any thing be *ſpoken* in plainer words than it may be *written*? If it cannot, how can we be ſatisfied of the certain ſenſe of any Doctrine Orally delivered? And if we cannot be ſo ſatisfi'd, where's the certainty of Oral Tradition? But if Books may be written ſo plainly, as that we may be abundantly ſatisfied that this is the certain ſenſe of ſuch and ſuch paſſages; then we may reaſonably reſt ſatisfied in evidence for theſe matters ſhort of Demonſtration. For was ever the ſenſe of any words ſo plain as that there did not remain *this ground of ſuſpence*, that thoſe words might be capable of another ſenſe? Mr. *Ruſhworth* * ſays, That *diſputative Scholars do find means daily to explicate the plaineſt words of an Author to a quite different ſenſe*: And that the World might be furniſh't with an advantageous inſtance of the poſſibility of this, *Naudus* * (a Writer of their own) hath made a wanton experiment upon the Apoſtles Creed, and by a ſiniſter (but poſſible) interpretation, hath made every Article of it Hereſie and Blaſphemy, on purpoſe to ſhew that the

* Dial. 2. Sect. 7.

* De bonis & malis Libris.

the plaineſt words are not free from ambiguity. But may be Mr. *S.* can out-do the Apoſtles, and can deliver the Chriſtian Doctrine ſo clearly, that he can demonſtrate it impoſſible for any man to put any other ſenſe upon any of his words than that which he intended. I do not know what may be done, but if Mr. *S.* doeth this, he muſt both mend his ſtyle, and his way of Demonſtration.

Is Mr. *S.* ſufficiently aſſured that there is ſuch a part of the World as *America*? and can he demonſtrate this to any man, without carrying him thither? Can he ſhew by any neceſſary Argument, that it is naturally impoſſible that all the Relations concerning that place ſhould be falſe? When his Demonſtrations have done their utmoſt, cannot * *a ſearching and ſincere Wit at leaſt maintain his ground of ſuſpence with A Might it not be otherwiſe*? and with an, Is it not poſſible that all men may be Lyars, or that a company of Travellers may have made uſe of their Privilege to abuſe the World by falſe Reports, and to put a Trick upon Mankind? or that all thoſe that pretend to go thither, and bring their Commodities from thence, may go to ſome other Parts of the World, and taking pleaſure in abuſing others, in the ſame manner as they have been impoſed upon themſelves, may ſay they have been at *America*? Who can tell but all this may be ſo? and yet I ſuppoſe, notwithſtanding the poſſibility of

* P. 27.

this, no man in his Wits is now poſſeſſed with ſo incredible a folly as to doubt whether there be ſuch a place. The caſe is the very ſame as to the certainty of an ancient Book and of the ſenſe of plain expreſſions: We have no demonſtration for theſe things, and we expect none; becauſe we know the things are not capable of it. We are not infallibly certain, that any Book is ſo ancient as it pretends to be, or that it was written by him whoſe name it bears, or that this is the ſenſe of ſuch and ſuch paſſages in it, it is poſſible all this may be otherwiſe; *that is*, it implies no contradiction: But we are very well aſſured that it is not; nor hath any prudent man any juſt cauſe to make the leaſt doubt of it. For a bare poſſibility that a thing may be, or not be, is no juſt cauſe of doubting whether a thing be or not. It is poſſible all the people in *France* may dye this night, but I hope the poſſibility of this doth not encline any man in the leaſt to think it will be ſo. It is poſſible the Sun may not riſe to morrow morning, and yet for all this I ſuppoſe that no man hath the leaſt doubt but that it will.

§. 3. But becauſe this *Principle*, viz. *That in matters of Religion a man cannot be reaſonably ſatisfy'd with any thing leſs than that infallible aſſurance which is wrought by Demonſtration*, is the main Pillar of Mr. *S*'s Book; therefore, beſide what hath been already ſaid

to

to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of this Principle, I ſhall take a little pains to manifeſt to him how much he is contradicted in this by the chief of *his Brethren of the Tradition*, *viz.* Mr. *Ruſhworth*, Dr. *Holden*, Mr. *Creſſy*, and Mr. *White*, who beſides Mr. *S.* and one *I. B.* are (ſo far as I can learn) all the publick Patrons that ever this *Hypotheſis* of Oral Tradition hath had in the World; and if Mr. *White* (as I have reaſon to believe) was the Authour of thoſe *Dialogues* which paſs under *Ruſhworth*'s name, the number of them is yet leſs. Now if I can ſhew that this *Principle* (eſteem'd by Mr. *S.* ſo fundamental to this *Hypotheſis*) is plainly contradicted by the principal *Aſſertors* of Oral Tradition, I ſhall hereby gain one of theſe two things; either that theſe great Patrons of Oral Tradition were ignorant of the true foundation of their own *Hypotheſis*, or that this *Principle* is not neceſſary for the ſupport of it. Not that I would be ſo underſtood as if I did deny that theſe very *Perſons* do ſometimes ſpeak very big words of the neceſſity of Infallibility: But if it be their pleaſure to contradict themſelves, as I have no reaſon to be diſpleaſed, ſo neither to be concerned for it; but ſhall leave it to Mr. *S.* to reconcile *them* firſt to *themſelves*, and then (if he pleaſes) afterwards to *himſelf*.

§. 4. I begin with Mr. *Ruſhworth* of immortal memory, for that noble attempt of his to perſwade the World that notwithſtand-

ing he was the first Inventer of this *Hypothesis* of Oral Tradition, yet he could prove that the Church had in all Ages owned it, and proceeded upon it as her only *Rule of Faith.* *He* in his *third Dialogue* *, when his *Nephew* objects to him, That *perhaps a Protestant would say that all* his foregoing Discourse *was but probability and likelihood, and therefore to hazard a mans Estate upon Peradventures, were something hard, and not very rationally done :* Replies thus to him, *What security do your Merchants, your States men, your Souldiers, those that go to Law, nay, even those that Till your grounds and work for their livings, what security, I say, do all these go upon ? Is it greater than the security which these grounds afford ? surely no. And yet no man esteems them foolish. All humane Affairs are hazardous, and have some adventure in them. And therefore who requires evident certainty only in matters of Religion, discovers in himself a less mind to the Goods promised in the next life, than to these which he seeks here in this World upon weaker assurance. Howsoever, the greatest evidence that can be to him that is not capable of convincing Demonstrations (which the greatest part of Mankind fall short of) is but conjectural.* So that (according to Mr. *Rushworth*) it is not reason and discretion, but want of love to God and Religion, which makes men require greater evidence for matters of Religion,

Sect. 3. & 4.

than

than for Humane Affairs, which yet (he tells us) are *hazardous, and have ſome adventure in them,* and conſequently are not capable of Demonſtration. Beſides, if demonſtrative evidence be an eſſential Property of the *Rule of Faith* (as Mr. *S.* affirms) then this Rule cannot (according to Mr. *Ruſhworth*) be of any uſe to *the greateſt part of Mankind,* becauſe they are *not capable of convincing Demonſtrations.* Again, *Do but conſider* (ſays he *) *how unequal and unjuſt a condition it is, that the claim of the preſent Church ſhall not be heard, unleſs ſhe can confute all the Peradventures that Wit may invent, and ſolve all the Arguments which the infinite variety of time, place, and occaſions may have given way unto; and then you will ſee how unreaſonable an Adverſary he is, who will not be content with any ſatisfaction, but ſuch as mans nature ſcarcely affords.* And is it not equally unjuſt in Mr. *S.* not to let Scripture's *claim be heard, unleſs* we *can confute* every *Peradventure* [and *might it not be otherwiſe*] *that Wit may invent*? See then *how unreaſonable an Adverſary* Mr. *S.* is, *who will not be content with any ſatisfaction, but ſuch as* (according to Mr. *Ruſhworth*) *mans nature ſcarcely affords.*

* Ibid. Sect. 6.

Dr. *Holden* (I confeſs) ſtates the matter ſomewhat cautiouſly, when he tells us *, *That it ſhall ſuffice for preſent to determine, that the Wiſdom of the Creator hath afforded*

* L. 1. c. 1.

us such an assurance, especially of Truths necessary to Salvation, as is sutable to our nature, and best fitted for the safe conduct of our lives in Moral and Religious Affairs: But if we interpret these general expressions by the passages I before cited out of Mr. *Rushworth* (as in reason we may, since the *Doctor* is beholding to him for the best part of his Book) then nothing can make more against Mr. *S*'s *Principle.*

*C. 19. Sect. 5 §. 5. Mr. *Cressy* in his *Exomologesis* * says, *That such Teachers, as approached neareſt to the fountain of Truth, Christ and his Apostles, had means of informing themselves in Apostolical Tradition incomparably beyond us.* Mr. *S.* may doe well to shew what those means were which are so incomparably beyond his *Infallibility* and *Demonstration.* The same

[*C. 32. Sect. 4 *Author* * does very much applaud *Stapleton*'s determination of the question concerning the Churches Infallibility, which is as follows,

That the Church does not expect to be taught by God immediately by new Revelations, but makes use of several means, &c. *as being govern'd not by Apostles,* &c. *but by ordinary Pastors and Teachers. That these Pastors in making use of these several means of Decision, proceed not as the Apostles did, with a peculiar infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, but with a prudential collection not always necessary. That to the Apostles who were the first Masters of Evangelical Faith, and founders of the Church, such*

such an infallible certitude of means was neceſſary: not ſo now to the Church, &c. If this be true, *That an infallible certitude of means is not now neceſſary to the Church*, and that her *Paſtors* do now in *deciding* matters of Faith proceed only with a prudent collection not always neceſſary; then it ſhould ſeem that *a ſearching Wit may maintain his ground of ſuſpence*, even againſt their Church alſo, with *A Might it not be otherwiſe?* Again, Mr. *Creſſy* * tells us, That *truth and our obligation to believe it, is in an higher degree in Scripture, than in the Deciſions of the Church, as* Bellarmine *acknowledges:* which is to ſay, that we may have greater aſſurance of the truth of Doctrines contained in the Scriptures, than we can have of any Doctrine from the determination of the Church. But if we have the greateſt aſſurance that can be of Truths deliver'd to us by the Church, as Mr. *S.* affirms, then I would fain learn of him what that *higher degree* of aſſurance is which *Bellarmine* ſpeaks of, and whether it be greater than the greateſt? Not to inſiſt upon that (which yet I cannot but by the way take notice of) that Mr. *Creſſy*, by his approbation of this determination of *Bellarmine's*, doth advance the Scripture above the Church as to one of the moſt eſſential Properties of the *Rule of Faith*, viz. the certainty of it.

* Append. c. 5.

But

But the moſt eminent Teſtimony to my purpoſe in Mr. *Creſſy*, is that *famous paſſage* * (which hath given ſo much offence to ſeveral of his own Church) wherein he acknowledges the *unfortunateneſs* (*to him*) of the *word Infallibility*, and tells us, *That he could find no ſuch word in any Council; That no neceſſity appear'd to him that either he or any other Proteſtant ſhould ever have heard that word nam'd, and much leſs preſs'd with ſo much earneſtneſs as of late it has generally been in Diſputations and Books of Controverſie*; and that Mr. *Chillingworth combats this word with too great ſucceſs*, inſomuch that *if this word were once forgotten or but laid by*, Mr. *Chillingworth's Arguments would loſe the greateſt part of their ſtrength*; and *that if this word were confin'd to the Schools where it was bred, there would be ſtill no inconvenience*: And *that ſince by manifeſt experience the Engliſh Proteſtants think themſelves ſo ſecure, when they have leave to ſtand or fall by that word, and in very deed have ſo much to ſay for themſelves when they are preſſed unneceſſarily with it: Since likewiſe it is a word capable of ſo high a ſenſe that we cannot deviſe one more full and proper to attribute to God himſelf*, &c. Since all this is ſo, he thinks he cannot be *blamed, if ſuch Reaſons move him to wiſh that the Proteſtants may never be invited to combat the Authority of the Church under that Notion.* A very ingenuous acknowledgment,

* C. 40. Sect. 3, &c.

and

and as croſs to Mr. *S*'s *Principle* as any thing can be. But the word *Infallibility* was not ſo *unfortunate* to Mr. *Creſſy*, as is his untoward Explication of the fore-cited paſſage, in his *Appendix* which he afterwards publiſhed chiefly by way of Vindication of himſelf againſt the *Learned Author* of the *Preface* to my Lord *Falkland*'s Diſcourſe of *Infallibility*. There he * tells us, That there are *ſeveral degrees of Infallibility*. And that we may know what degree of Infallibility he thinks neceſſary to be attributed to the Church, this following paſſage will inform us: *Methinks* (ſays he) *if God have furniſhed his divine and ſupernatural Truth, with evidence equal to this, that the Sun will ſhine to morrow, or that there will be a Spring and Harveſt next year, we are infinitely obliged to bleſs his Providence, and juſtly condemned, if we refuſe to believe the leaſt of ſuch Truths, as ſhewing leſs affection to ſave our ſouls, than the dull Plowmen to ſow their Corn, who certainly have far leſs evidence for their Harveſt, than Catholicks for their Faith*; and yet *they inſiſt not peeviſhly upon every capricious Objection, nor exact an infallible ſecurity of a plentifull reaping next Summer, but notwithſtanding all difficulties and contingencies proceed chearfully in their painfull Husbandry*. So that according to this Diſcourſe, whatever degree of aſſurance the Church hath, or can give to thoſe who rely upon her, it is plain that no farther

* Append. Sect. 2. & 3.

ther degree is neceſſary than what the Huſbandman, when he ſows, hath of a plentifull Harveſt; and that men are juſtly condemned if they refuſe to believe the leaſt truth upon ſuch ſecurity, which yet (by his own acknowledgment) is liable to Contingencies: Nay farther, that men are not reaſonable, but *peeviſh*, in *exacting infallible ſecurity*, and *inſiſting upon every capricious Objection*, ſuch as is Mr. *S*'s *Might it not be otherwiſe?* Now as to this degree of Aſſurance, or (as he calls it) Infallibility, I cannot but grant what he ſays of it to be moſt true, *viz.* That *in a ſevere acception of the word* it is not *rigorouſly infallible*, that is (as he explains it) it is not *abſolutely impoſſible*, nor does it *imply a flat contradiction* that the thing whereof we are ſo aſſured may be otherwiſe: But then I utterly deny that according to any true acception of this word, ſuch a degree of Aſſurance as he ſpeaks of can be called Infallibility; and withall I affirm, That none of thoſe ſeveral degrees of Infallibility which he mentions, excepting that only which imports an abſolute impoſſibility, can with any tolerable propriety of ſpeech or regard to the true meaning and uſe of the word, have the name of Infallibility given to them. For Infallibility can ſignifie nothing elſe but an utter impoſſibility that one ſhould be deceived in that matter as to which he is ſuppoſed to be infallible; and to ſay ſuch a thing is impoſſible,

ble, is to ſay that the exiſtence of it implies a flat contradiction. So that whoſoever aſſerts degrees of Infallibility, is obliged to ſhew that there are degrees of abſolute impoſſibilities, and of perfect contradictions; and he had need of a very ſharp and piercing wit that is to find out degrees where there neither are nor can be any. Indeed, in reſpect of the objects of knowledge, it is eaſie to conceive how Infallibility may be extended to more objects or fewer; but in reſpect of the degree of aſſurance (of which Mr. *Creſſy* ſpeaks) it is altogether unimaginable how any one can be more or leſs out of *all poſſibility* of being deceived in thoſe things wherein he is ſuppoſed to be infallible; for no one can be more removed from the poſſibility of being deceived, than he that is out of *all poſſibility* of being deceived, and whoſoever is leſs than this, is not infallible; becauſe he only is ſo, who is out of *all* poſſibility of being deceived in thoſe matters wherein he is ſuppoſed to be infallible. So that Mr. *Creſſy*'s lower degrees of Infallibility are no degrees of that aſſurance which may properly be called infallible (for that can have no degrees) but of that aſſurance which is leſs than infallible. And he needed not have raiſed all this duſt about the degrees of Infallibility, had it not been that by the means of ſuch a Cloud he might make the more convenient eſcape out of that ſtrait he was in between

tween the clamours of his own Church, and the advantage which his Adverſaries made of his free and open diſcourſe againſt Infallibility. For any one that carefully reads his Book, will find that he underſtands nothing by the Infallibility of the Church, but *an Authority of obliging all Chriſtians to ſubmit to her Deciſions*, which is no more but what every Supreme Civil Judge hath in matters, *viz.* a power to determine thoſe Controverſies that lie before him as well as he *can* or *will*, and when that is done every one is bound to ſubmit to ſuch determinations; but yet for all this, no man ever dream't a Supreme Civil Judge to be *infallible* more than another man. I do not now diſpute the extent of the Churches Authority; but if ſhe have no other Infallibility but what a full Authority of deciſion does ſuppoſe, I am ſure ſhe hath none at all.

Before I leave Mr. *Creſſy*, I cannot but take notice how *unfortunate* and diſingenuous he is in explaining the meaning of theſe words of his own, *viz.* [*Againſt this word of Infallibility Mr.* Chillingworth's *Book eſpecially combats, and this with too too great ſucceſs*] which in his *Appendix* * he interprets thus, *Succeſs, I mean, not againſt the Church, but againſt his own Soul, and the Souls of his Fellow Engliſh Proteſtants*, &c. As if one that had wiſhed well to *Cæſar* ſhould have ſaid, *That* Pompey *had fought againſt him with too too great*

* C. 5. Sect. 6.

great ſucceſs; and being afterwards challenged by *Cæſar*'s Party, as having ſaid that *Pompey* had Conquered *Cæſar*, he ſhould explain himſelf thus, *Succeſs, I mean, not againſt* Cæſar, *but againſt his own life, and the lives of his followers.* Can any thing be finer than for any man to ſay that by *Pompey*'s *ſucceſs* in fighting againſt *Cæſar*, he means that *Cæſar* had beaten *Pompey*? which is no more than if one ſhould take the liberty to interpret *white* by *black*.

§ 6. *Laſtly*, Mr. *White* doth moſt expreſly contradict this *Principle* of Mr. *S*'s in theſe following paſſages. In his *Preface* to Mr. *Ruſhworth* he ſays, *That ſuch a certainty as makes the cauſe always work the ſame effect, though it take not away the abſolute poſſibility of working otherwiſe, ought abſolutely to be reckoned in the degree of true certainty*; and that thoſe *Authours* are *miſtaken* who *undervalue it*. So that it ſeems Mr. *S*. is miſtaken in affirming that a man cannot be certain of any thing ſo long as there is any poſſibility that it may be otherwiſe. In his *Anſwer* to my Lord *Falkland*, he ſays *, That in *Moral matters, and ſuch as are ſubject to humane action, we muſt expect ſuch aſſurance as humane actions bear. If for the government of your ſpiritual life you have as much as for the management of your natural and civil life, what can you expect more? Two or three witneſſes of men beyond exception will caſt a man*

* P. 14, 15.

man out of not onely his lands, but life and all. He that among Merchants will not adventure, where there is a Hundred to one of gaining, will be accounted a ſilly Factour. And among Souldiers, he that will fear danger where but one of a Hundred is ſlain, ſhall not eſcape the ſtain of Cowardize. What then ſhall we expect in Religion, but to ſee a main advantage on the one ſide which we may reſt our ſelves on? and for the reſt, remember we are men ſubject to chance and mutability, and thank God he hath given us that aſſurance in a ſupernatural way, which we are contented withall in our civil ventures and poſſeſſions, which nevertheleſs God knoweth we often love better, and would hazard leſs than the unknown good of the life to come. Again *, *If God Almighty hath in all ſorts and manners provided his Church that ſhe may enlighten every man in his way, that goeth the way of a man, then let every man conſider which is the fit way for himſelf, and what in other matters of that way he accounteth evidence. And if there be no intereſt in his Soul to make him loth to believe, what in another matter of the like nature he doth not ſtick at, or heavy to practiſe what he ſees clearly enough, I fear not his choice.* Once more; directing a man in his ſearch after rational ſatisfaction in matters of Religion, he hath this paſſage; * *Beſides this, he muſt have this care; that heſe ek what the nature of the ſubject*

* P. 30.

* P. 46.

subject can yield, and not as those Physicians, who when they have promised no less than Immortality, can at last onely reach to some conservation of health or youth in some small degree: So I could wish the Authour to well assure himself first, that there is possible an Infallibility, before he be too earnest to be contented with nothing less; for what if humane nature should not be capable of so great a good? Would he therefore think it fitting to live without any Religion, because he could not get such a one as himself desired, though with more than a man's wish? Were it not rational to see, whether among Religions some one have not such notable advantages over the rest, as in reason it might seem humane nature might be contented withall? Let him cast his account with the dearest things he hath, his own or friends lives, his estate, his hope of posterity, and see upon what terms of advantage he is ready to venture all these; and then return to Religion, and see whether, if he do not venture his soul upon the like, it be truely reason, or some other not confessed motive, which withdraws him. For my own part, as I doubt not of an Infallibility, so I doubt not but setting that aside, there be those Excellencies found on the Catholick party, which may force a man to prefer it, and to venture all he hath upon it, before all other Religions and Sects in the World. Why then may not one who after long searching findeth no In-

fallibility, rest himself on the like, supposing man's nature affords no better?

Are not these fair Concessions, which the evidence and force of Truth have extorted from these Authours? So that it seems that *that* which Mr. *S.* calls * *a civil piece of Atheistry*, is advanced in most express words by his best Friends, and therefore I hope he will (as he threatens me) *be smart* with them *in opposition to so damnable and fundamental an Errour.* And whenever he attempts this, I would entreat him to remember that he hath these two things to prove. *First*, That no evidence, but demonstration, can give a man sufficient assurance of any thing. *Secondly*, That a bare possibility that a thing may be otherwise, is a rational cause of doubting, and a wise ground of suspense: which when he hath proved, I shall not grudge him his Infallibility.

* Letter to his Answerer p. 5.

SECT. V.

That Scripture is sufficient to convince the most acute Adversaries: and that it is sufficiently certain.

§ 1. THE last part of this *Third Discourse* endeavours to shew *that the Scripture is not convictive of the most obstinate and acute Adversaries.* As for the *obstinate*, he knows my mind already. Let us see why *the most acute Adversary* may not be convinced by Scripture. Because as *he* objects * *First*, We cannot be certain that this *Book*

* P. 28.

is God's Word, becauſe of the *many ſtrange Abſurdities and Hereſies in the open letter as it lies, as that God hath hands and feet,* &c. and becauſe *of the contradictions in it:* To which I have already returned an anſwer. *Secondly,* Becauſe (as he ſaith *) we cannot be *certain of the Truth of the letter in any particular Text, that it was not foiſted in, or ſome way altered in its ſignificativeneſs; and if it be a negative propoſition, that the particle* [*not*] *was not inſerted, if affirmative, not left out.* And if we pretend to be certain of this, he *demands* * *our demonſtration for it.* But how unreaſonable this *demand* is, I hope I have ſufficiently ſhewn. And to ſhew it yet farther, I ask him, How their Church knows, that the particle [*not*] was not left out of any Text in which it is now found in their Copies? I know he hath a ready anſwer, *viz.* by Oral Tradition. But this (according to him *) onely reaches to *Scriptures letter ſo far as it is coincident with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine;* concerning the reſt of Scripture it is impoſſible (according to his own principles) that they ſhould have any ſecurity that the particle [*not*] was not unduly inſerted, or left out by the Tranſcribers. Nay, as to theſe Texts of Scripture which fall in with the main body of Chriſtian Doctrine, I demand his demonſtration that the particle [*not*] was not unduly inſerted,

* P. 31.

* P. 31.

* P. 118.

or left out, not onely in those Texts, but also in the Oral Tradition of the Doctrines coincident with the sense of those Texts. If he say, It was impossible any Age should conspire to leave out or insert the particle [*not*] in the Oral Tradition; so say I it was that they should conspire to leave it out of the written Text: But then I differ from him thus far, That I do not think this naturally impossible, so as that it can rigorously be demonstrated, but onely morally impossible, so that no body hath any reason to doubt of it; which to a prudent man is as good as a demonstration. *Pyrrho* himself never advanced any *Principle* of *Scepticism* beyond this, *viz.* That men ought to question the credit of all Books, concerning which they cannot demonstrate as to every sentence in them, that the particle [*not*] was not inserted (if it be affirmative) or left out (if it be negative.) If so much be required to free a man from reasonable doubting concerning a Book, how happy are they that have attained to infallibility! What he saith concerning the *Variæ Lectiones* * of Scripture, hath already had a sufficient answer.

* P. 32.

§ 2. In his *Fourth Discourse*, he endeavours to shew *, That the Scripture *is not certain in it self*, and consequently *not ascertained to us*. First, *Not certain, materially considered* * *as consisting of such and such Characters,*

* P. 33.

* P. 34.

racters, becauſe Books are liable to be burnt, torn, blotted, worn out. We grant, it is not impoſſible but that any, or all the Books in the World may be burnt: But then we ſay likewiſe, That a Book ſo univerſally diſperſed may eaſily be preſerved; though we have no aſſurance that God will preſerve it, in caſe all men ſhould be ſo fooliſh or ſo careleſs as to endeavour or ſuffer the abolition of it. But it ſeems the Scriptures cannot be a Rule of Faith if they be liable to any external accidents. And this (he tells us *) *Though it may ſeem a remote and impertinent Exception, yet to one who conſiders the wiſe diſpoſitions of Divine Providence, it will deſerve a deep conſideration; becauſe the ſalvation of Mankind being the end of God's making nature, the means to it ſhould be more ſetled, ſtrong, and unalterable, than any other piece of nature whatever.* But notwithſtanding this wiſe reaſon, this *Exception* ſtill ſeems to me both *remote* and *impertinent*. For if this which he calls a Reaſon be a Truth, it will from thence neceſſarily follow, not onely that the Doctrine of Chriſt muſt be conveyed by ſuch a means as is more unalterable than the courſe of nature; but alſo by a clear parity of Reaſon, that all the means of our ſalvation do operate towards the accompliſhing of their end with greater certainty than the fire burns, or the Sun ſhines; which they can never doe, unleſs they operate more

* P. 34.

more neceſſarily than any natural cauſes; how they can do ſo upon voluntary Agents, I deſire Mr. *S.* to inform me.

§ 3. He proceeds by a long Harangue to ſhew *, That not onely theſe material Characters in themſelves are corruptible, but *in complexion with the cauſes, actually laid in the World to preſerve them entire; becauſe either thoſe cauſes are material, and then they are alſo liable to continual alterations; or ſpiritual, that is, the minds of men, and from theſe we may with good reaſon hope for a greater degree of conſtancy, than from any other piece of nature*; which by the way, is a very ſtrange Paradox, that the actions of voluntary Agents have a greater certainty and conſtancy in them, than thoſe of natural Agents; of which the fall of Angels and Men, compared with the continuance of the Sun and Stars in their firſt ſtate, is a very good evidence.

* P. 34.

§ 4. But he adds a Caution *, *That they are perfectly unalterable from their nature, and unerrable, if due circumſtances be obſerved, that is, if due propoſals be made to beget certain knowledge, and due care uſed to attend to ſuch propoſals.* But who can warrant, That *due propoſals* will always be made to men, and *due care* uſed by them? If theſe be uncertain, where's the *conſtancy* and *unerrableneſs* he talks ſo much of? So that notwithſtanding the conſtancy of this *ſpiri-*

* P. 35.

tual

tual cauſe (*the mind of man*) of preſerving Scriptures entire, yet in order to this (as he tells * us) *So many actions are to be done, which are compounded and made up of an innumerable multitude of ſeveral particularities to be obſerved, every of which may be miſtaken apart, each being a diſtinct little action in its ſingle ſelf, ſuch as is the tranſcribing of a whole Book, conſiſting of ſuch Myriads of words, ſingle letters, and tittles or ſtops; and the ſeveral actions of writing over each of theſe ſo ſhort and curſory, that it prevents diligence, and exceeds humane care, to keep awake and apply diſtinct attentions to every of theſe diſtinct actions.* Mr. *Ruſhworth* * much out-does Mr. *S.* in theſe minute Cavils, for he tells us, That *ſuppoſing an Original Copy of Chriſt's words, written by one of the Evangeliſts in the ſame language, let him have ſet down every word and ſyllable, yet men converſant in noting the changes of meanings in words will tell us, that divers accents in the pronunciation of them, the turning of the ſpeakers head or body this way or that way,* &c. *may ſo change the ſenſe of the words, that they will ſeem quite different in writing from what they were in ſpeaking.* I hope that Oral and Practical Tradition hath been careſull to preſerve all theſe circumſtances, and hath deliver'd down Chriſt's Doctrine with all the right *Traditionary Accents, Nods* and *Geſtures* neceſſary for the underſtanding of it; otherwiſe the

* P. 36.

* Dial. 2. Sect. 7.

omiſſion of theſe may have ſo altered the ſenſe of it, that it may be now quite different from what it was at firſt. But to anſwer Mr. *S.* We do not pretend to be aſſured, that it is naturally impoſſible that the Scriptures ſhould have been corrupted or changed, but onely to be ſufficiently aſſured that they have not received any material alteration, from as good Arguments as the nature of the Subject will bear. But if his *Reaſon* had not been very *ſhort* and *curſory*, he might eaſily have reflected, that *Oral Tradition* is equally liable to all theſe contingencies. For it doth as much *prevent diligence, and exceed humane care, to keep awake and apply diſtinct attentions to the diſtinct actions of ſpeaking, as of writing.* And I hope he will not deny, that a Doctrine *Orally delivered*, conſiſts of *words*, and *letters*, and *accents*, and *ſtops*, as well as a Doctrine *written*; and that the ſeveral actions of *ſpeaking*, are as *ſhort* and *curſory* as of *writing*.

* P. 38. § 5. *Secondly*, He tells us *, *Scripture formally conſidered as to its ſignificativeneſs, is*

* P. 38. *alſo uncertain.* Firſt, * *Becauſe of the uncertainty of the letter.* This is already an-

* P. 38. ſwered. Secondly, * *Becauſe the certain ſenſe of it is not to be arrived to by the Vulgar, who are deſtitute of Languages and Arts.* True, where men are not permitted to have the Scriptures in their own Language, and underſtand no other: But where they are allowed

allowed the Scriptures tranſlated into their own Language they may underſtand them, all neceſſary points of Faith and Practice being ſufficiently plain in any Tranſlation of the Bible that I know of: And that * eminent Wits cannot agree about the ſenſe of Texts which concern the main points of Faith, hath been ſpoken to already. * P. 38.

§ 6. As for the Reverence he pretends to Scripture in the concluſion of his *Fourth Diſcourſe*, he might have ſpared that, after all the raillery and rudeneſs he hath uſed againſt it. It is eaſie to conjecture, both from his principles and his uncivil expreſſions concerning them, what his eſteem is of thoſe Sacred Oracles. Probably it was requiſite in prudence to caſt in a few good words concerning the Scriptures, for the ſake of the more tender and ſqueamiſh Novices of their Religion, or (as Mr. *Ruſhworth*'s *Nephew* * ſays frankly and openly) *for the ſatisfaction of indifferent men, that have been brought up in this verbal and apparent reſpect of the Scripture*, who it ſeems are not yet attained to that degree of Catholick Piety and Fortitude as to endure patiently that the Word of God ſhould be reviled or ſlighted. Beſides that, in reference to thoſe whom they hope hereafter to convert (who might be too much alienated from their Religion, if he had expreſſed nothing but contempt towards a Book, which Proteſtants, and Chriſtians * Dial. 2. Sect. 14.

ſtians in all Ages till the very dregs of Popery, have been bred up to a high veneration of,) it was not much amiſs to paſs this formal complement upon the Bible; which the wiſe of his own Religion will eaſily underſtand, and may ſerve to catch the reſt. But let him not deceive himſelf, *God is not mocked.*

SECT. VI.

§ 1. *Secondly*, He comes to ſhew *, *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith belong to Oral Tradition.* And, *Firſt*, He gives a tedious explanation of the nature of this *Oral Practical Tradition*, which amounts to this; That as in reference to the civil Education of Children, *they are taught their own and others names, to write and reade, and exerciſe their Trades:* So in reference to Religion, the Children of Chriſtians *firſt hear ſounds, afterwards by degrees get dim notions of God, Chriſt, Saviour, Heaven, Hell, Vertue, Vice, and by degrees practiſe what they have heard; they are ſhewn to ſay Grace, and their Prayers, to hold up their hands, or perhaps eyes, and to kneel, and other poſtures.* Afterward they are acquainted with the *Creed, Ten Commandments, and Sacraments, ſome common Forms of Prayer, and other practices of Chriſtianity, and are directed to order their lives accordingly*, and are *guided* in all this *by the actions and carriage*

* P. 41. That the Properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Oral Tradition.

riage of the elder faithfull; and *this goes on by inſenſible degrees, not by leaps, from a Hundred years to a Hundred, but from Month to Month, and even leſs.* If this be all that Tradition doeth, this is nothing but what is done among Proteſtants, and that with greater advantage; becauſe we always teach Children to ſay their Prayers in a known Tongue ſo as they may underſtand them. And we alſo teach them the Creed, and Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments, ſo many as Chriſt hath inſtituted and no more. So that if this be ſo infallible a way of conveying the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, we have it among us. And we do over and beſides, inſtruct them in the Scriptures, which are the authentick Inſtrument whereby Chriſt's Doctrine is conveyed to us. But then we do not ſuppoſe (as his *Hypotheſis* neceſſarily enforceth him to doe) that the Chriſtian Doctrine is equally taught and learned by all; but by ſome more, by others leſs perfectly, according to the different abilities and diligence of Parents and Teachers, and the various capacities and diſpoſitions of Children; whereas his *Hypotheſis* falls, if all or at leaſt the generality of Parents do not inſtruct their Children with the like exactneſs, and if the generality of Children do not receive this Doctrine in the ſame perfection that it is delivered. For if it be taught or received with any variation, it muſt neceſſarily be

be ſo conveyed, and theſe variations will grow daily. I had thought he would have told us, how all Parents do teach their Children the whole Body of Chriſt's Doctrine, and explain to them every part of it in a Hundred or a Thouſand ſeveral expreſſions ſignifying the ſame ſenſe, and not have inſtanced in two *Set-forms*, ſuch *as the Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*; for according to Mr. *White* *, *That cannot be a Tradition, which is delivered in ſet-words.*

* Apolog. P. 81.

§ 2. Having thus explained Oral Tradition, he comes to ſhew that the Properties of a Rule of Faith agree to it. I have already ſhewed that the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* are but *two*, viz. *That it be plain and intelligible, and that it be ſufficiently certain.* The *firſt* of theſe, that Oral Tradition may deliver a Doctrine plainly and intelligibly, I grant him. All the difficulty is about the *ſecond* Property, whether we have ſufficient aſſurance that the Doctrine delivered down by Oral Tradition hath received no corruption or change in its conveyance: And all that he pretends to prove in this *Diſcourſe* is, That if this Rule hath been followed and kept to all along, the Chriſtian Doctrine neither hath, nor can have received any change; that is, if the next Age after the Apoſtles did truely, and without any alteration deliver the Chriſtian Doctrine to their immediate Succeſſours, and they to theirs, and

and ſo on, then upon this ſuppoſition the Doctrine of the preſent Traditionary Church muſt be the very ſame with that which was delivered to the Apoſtles. All this is readily granted to him. But that this Rule hath always been followed, nay, that it is impoſſible there ſhould have been any deviation from it (as he pretends) this we deny, not onely as untrue, but as one of the moſt abſurd Propoſitions that ever yet pretended to demonſtrative evidence.

THE

THE Rule of Faith.

PART III.

In which Mr. S's Demonſtrations and Corollaries are examined.

SECT. I.

Conſiderations touching his Demonſtrations in general.

§. 1. BEfore I come to ſpeak particularly to his *Demonſtrations*, I ſhall premiſe theſe *two Conſiderations*. *Firſt*, That (according to the Principle of the Patrons of Tradition) no man can by his private Reaſon certainly find out the true *Rule of Faith*. *Secondly*, That (according to Mr. *S.*) the way of Demonſtration is no certain way to find out the *Rule of Faith*. If either of theſe be made out, his Demonſtrations loſe all their force. If the *firſt* be made good, then he cannot demonſtrate the Infallibility of Tradition, nor conſequently that *that* is the *Rule of Faith*. If the *ſecond*, then the way of Demonſtration which he pretends to take ſignifies nothing.

§. 2. *Firſt*,

§ 2. *First*, No man can (according to the principles of the Patrons of Tradition) by his private Reaſon certainly find out what is the *Rule of Faith*. Suppoſe a Heathen to be deſirous to inform himſelf of the Chriſtian Faith; in order to which he is inquiſitive after ſome Rule by which he may take a meaſure of it, and come certainly to know what it is: He enquires of Chriſtians what their Rule is, and finds them divided about it, ſome ſaying that the Scripture, others that Oral Tradition is the Rule. In this caſe it is not poſſible (without a Revelation) for this man to find out the *Rule of Faith*, but by his own private Reaſon examining and weighing the arguments and pretences of both ſides. And when he hath done this, unleſs he can by his Reaſon demonſtrate that the one is a certain and infallible Rule, and the other not ſo, he hath not (according to Mr. *S.*) found out the *Rule of Faith*. But Reaſon can never doe this, according to *Mr. S.* For ſpeaking of demonſtrating the certainty of Tradition, *he* tells us *, *That Tradition hath for its Baſis mans nature not according to his Intellectuals, which do but darkly grope in the purſuit of Science*, &c. And again *, ſpeaking how Reaſon brings men to the *Rule of Faith*, he uſes this compariſon, *She is like a dim-ſighted man, who uſed his Reaſon to find a truſty Friend to lead him in the twilight, and then relied on his guidance rationally without uſing*

* P. 53.

* Append. 2d. P. 183.

using his own Reason at all about the Way itself. So that (according to him) the certainty of Tradition cannot be founded on Demonstration, because it is not founded in the *intellectual* part of man, which only can demonstrate. Besides, if it were founded in the intellectual part, yet that can never be able to demonstrate the certainty of Tradition, because that faculty which is *dim-sighted*, and does but *grope darkly in the pursuit of Science*, is uncapable of framing Demonstrations. Nor can any man understand how *dim sighted* reason should see clearly to chuse its guide, any more than its way, especially if it be considered what a pretty Contradiction it is, to say that Reason as it is *dim sighted* can *see clearly.*

But Mr. *Cressy* is not contented to call every mans Reason *dim-sighted*, he ventures a step farther, and calls it *hoodwinkt* and *blind*: For he tells us *, *That private Reason is apparently a most fallible guide*; and he pities* my Lord *Falkland*'s case, because in the search of the true Religion he did *betake himself to the casual conduct of blind, humane, natural Reason*, which afterwards he calls * *a guide that two persons cannot possibly follow together, because no two persons (that ever followed any other guide beside Authority) did or could think all things to be reasonable that all others thought so*; and by consequence *such a guide that as long as he continues in that office, there cannot*

* Append. c. 6. Sect. 8.
* Ibid Sect. 9
* Ibid. Sect. 11.

cannot possibly be any Church any where: which (says he) *is an infallible eviction that this is an imaginary seducing guide, since it is impossible that that should be a guide appointed for any Christian, which neither Christ nor his Apostles, nor any of their Followers ever mentioned, yea, which formally destroys one of our twelve Articles of the Apostles Creed*, viz. *I believe the Holy Catholick Church.* Thus he does by Reason *clearly and infallibly evince*, that Reason cannot be otherwise than a most *blind and fallible guide.* This it is to talk of things when a man looks only upon one side of them; as if becauſe Reaſon has *a blind ſide* and is uncertain in ſome things, therefore we ought to conclude her *univerſally blind* and uncertain in every thing; and as if becauſe all men cannot think all things reaſonable which any one man thinks to be ſo, therefore it is to be doubted whether thoſe common Principles of Reaſon be true which Mankind are generally agreed in. And that Mr. *Creſſy* ſpeaks here of the uſe of our private Reaſon in the finding out of our Rule, is clear from what he ſays in the next *Section*, viz. *That this hood-wink't guide* (*enquiring into Scripture, and ſearching after Tradition*) *may poſſibly ſtumble upon the way to Unity and Truth, that is, the true Catholick Church.* If this be true, why does Mr. *S.* pretend that he can by Reaſon demonſtrate the Infallibility of Tradition, and by this

hood-wink't guide lead men to the true *Rule of Faith?* And what a pitifull encouragement would this be to an inquisitive Philosopher (who knowing no other guide but his Reason, whereby to find out whether Scripture or Tradition be the Rule) to tell him that by the help of this *hood wink't guide he might possibly stumble* upon the right?

A man may justly stand amazed at the inconsistency of these mens Discourses and Principles. In one *Mood* they are all for *Demonstration*, and for convincing men *in the way of perfect Science* which is the true *Rule of Faith:* But then again when another *fit* takes them, there's no such thing as Science, *humane Reason* grows all on the sudden *dimsighted*, and at the next word is struck *stark blind*; and then the very utmost that it can do towards the bringing of an unprejudiced and inquisitive person to the true *Rule of Faith*, is to leave him in a *possibility of stumbling* upon it; but if he be a Heretick that makes use of private Reason for his guide, then * *it is impossible but that he with his blind guide should fall into the Pit.* I cannot for my part imagine how they can reconcile the *blindness* of humane Reason with all that noise which they make about Science and Demonstration; but this I must confess that these kind of Discourses which I meet with in Mr. *S.* and Mr. *Cressy*, are very proper Arguments to perswade a man of the blindness of humane

* Append. c. 7. Sect. 8.

mane Reaſon. And indeed there is one paſſage in Mr. *Creſſy*, which gives me very great ſatisfaction concerning theſe matters, where he tells us *, That the *Wit and Judgment of Catholicks is to renounce their own Judgment, and depoſe their own Wit.* Now he that profeſſes to have done this may write Contradictions, and no body ought to challenge him for it. However, it is a very ingenuous acknowledgment, that when he forſook our Church and turned Papiſt, he laid aſide his Judgment and Wit; which is juſt ſuch an heroick act of Judgment, as if a man in a bravery to ſhew his liberty ſhould ſell himſelf for a ſlave. I am glad to underſtand from an experienced Perſon, what charges a man muſt be at when he turns *Roman Catholick*, namely, that whoever will embrace that Religion muſt forfeit his Reaſon.

* Ibid.

§ 3. *Secondly*, The way of Demonſtration is (according to Mr. *S.*) no certain way to find out the *Rule of Faith.* In his 4th *Appendix* * againſt my Lord of *Down*, one of the *Eight Mines* (as he calls them) which he *lays to blow up my Lords Diſſuaſive againſt Popery*, is this, *That the method he takes in diſſuading cannot be held in reaſon to have power to diſſuade, unleſs it be proper to that effect, that is, not common to that effect and a contrary one. Now, that being moſt evidently no method or way to ſuch an effect which many follow and take, yet arrive not at that ef-*

* P. 253. & 254.

fect, 'tis plain to common ſenſe, that my Lord of Down *miſcalls his Book A Diſſuaſive, and that it can have in it no power of moving the underſtanding one way or other, unleſs he can firſt vouch ſome particularity in the method he takes, above what's in others in which we experience miſcarriage*, &c. If this be true, then his *method* of Demonſtration is no *way* to make men certain of what he pretends to demonſtrate, becauſe that is *moſt evidently no way to an effect which many follow and take, yet arrive not at that effect*; ſo that *'tis plain to common ſenſe* that Mr. *S*'s Demonſtrations *can have in them no power of moving the underſtanding one way or other, unleſs he can vouch ſome particularity* in the Demonſtrations he pretends to bring, *above what is* in other pretended Demonſtrations *in which we experience miſcarriage.* Do not *Thomas*, and *Scotus* (as Mr. *White* tells us *) all along pretend to demonſtrate? and yet it is generally believed that (at leaſt where they contradict one another) one of them failed in his Demonſtrations. Did not Mr. *Charles Thynne* pretend to have demonſtrated that a man at one jump might leap from *London* to *Rome*? and yet I do not think any one was ever ſatisfi'd with his Demonſtration. And Mr. *S.* knows one in the World (whom I will not name, becauſe he hath ſince ingenuouſly acknowledged his Error) who thought he had demonſtrated the *Quadrature of the Circle*,

* Extaſis, P. 24.

Circle, and was ſo confident of it as to venture the reputation of his Demonſtrations in Divinity upon it, and ſome of thoſe Divinity Demonſtrations were the very ſame with Mr. *S*'s. Since therefore the World hath *experienced* ſo much *miſcarriage* in the way of Demonſtration, before Mr. *S*'s Demonſtrations can be allowed to ſignifie any thing, *he muſt* (according to his own Law) *vouch ſome particularity* in his *way* and *method* of Demonſtration above what is in other mens. He hath not any where (that I remember) told us what that *particularity* is, wherein his *way* of Demonſtration is above other mens: Nor can I upon the moſt diligent ſearch find any peculiar advantage that his *Way* has more than theirs above mentioned; unleſs this be one that he pretends to demonſtrate a ſelf-evident Principle, and herein I think he hath plainly the advantage of Mr. *Charles Thynne*; and unleſs this may be counted another advantage, that he has ſo extraordinary a confidence and conceit of his own Demonſtrations; and in this particular, I muſt acknowledge that he clearly excells all that have gone before him: In all other things, his way of Demonſtration is but like his Neighbours.

SECT. II.

Mr. S's demonſtration *à priori.*

§ 1. I Come now to examine his *Demonſtrations* of this *Self-evident Principle* (as he often calls it) that Oral Tradition is a certain and infallible way of conveying Chriſt's Doctrine from one Age to another, without any corruption or change; which is to ſay, that it is impoſſible but that this Rule ſhould always have been kept to. That this is not a *Self evident Principle*, needs no other evidence than that he goes about to *demonſtrate* it. But yet, notwithſtanding this, I think he hath as much reaſon to call *this* a *Self-evident Principle*, as to call his *proofs* of it *Demonſtrations*.

§ 2. In order to his Demonſtration *à Priori*, he lays * theſe four *grounds*, which I ſhall ſet down in his own words. Firſt, *That Chriſtian Doctrine was at firſt unanimouſly ſetled by the Apoſtles, in the hearts of the faithfull diſperſed in great multitudes over ſeveral parts of the World.* Secondly, *That this Doctrine was firmly believed by all thoſe faithfull to be the way to Heaven, and the contradicting or deſerting it, to be the way to damnation; ſo that the greateſt hopes and fears imaginable were by engaging the Divine Authority ſtrongly applied to the minds of the firſt Believers, encouraging them to the adhering to that Doctrine, and deterring them from relinquiſhing*

* P. 59, 60.

linquiſhing it ; and indeed infinitely greater than any other whatever, ſpringing from any temporal conſideration : and that this was in all Ages the perſwaſion of the faithfull. Thirdly, *That hopes of good and fears of harms ſtrongly applied are the cauſes of actual will.* Fourthly, *That the thing was feaſible or within their power ; that what they were bred to was knowable by them. This put, it follows as certainly that a great number or body of the firſt Believers and after faithfull in each Age, that is, from Age to Age would continue to hold themſelves and teach their Children as themſelves had been taught, that is, would follow and ſtick to Tradition, as it doth, that a cauſe put actually cauſing produceth its effect.* This is his *Demonſtration* with the *grounds* of it.

§ 3. To ſhew the vanity and weakneſs of this pretended *Demonſtration*, I ſhall aſſail it theſe *three* ways; by ſhewing, *Firſt*, That if the grounds of it were true they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impoſſible which common experience evinceth, and himſelf muſt grant to have been. *Secondly*, That his main grounds are apparently falſe. *Thirdly*, That his Demonſtration is confuted by clear and undeniable Inſtances to the contrary.

SECT. III.

The *First* answer to this Demonstration.

§. 1. IF the grounds of it were true, they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impossible which common experience evinceth and himself must grant to have been. For if these two *Principles* be true, *That the greatest hopes and fears are strongly applied to the minds of all Christians ; and that those hopes and fears strongly applied are the cause of actual will to adhere constantly to Christ's Doctrine :* then from hence it follows that none that entertain this Doctrine can ever fall from it ; because falling from it is inconsistent with an actual will of adhering constantly to it. For supposing (as he doth) certain and constant causes of actual will to adhere to this Doctrine, those who entertain it must actually will to adhere to it, because *a cause put actually causing produceth its effect*, which is constant adherence to it. And if this were true these two things would be impossible. *First*, That any Christian should turn Apostate or Heretick. *Secondly*, That any Christian should live wickedly. Both which not only frequent and undoubted experience doth evince, but himself must grant, *de facto* to have been.

§. 2. *First*, It would be impossible that any Christian should turn *Apostate* or *Heretick*. *Heresie* according to him is nothing else

elſe but the *renouncing of Tradition.* Now he tells us *, *That the firſt Renouncers of Tradition muſt have been true Believers or holders of it, e'er they renounced it*; and I ſuppoſe there is the ſame reaſon for *Apoſtates.* But if all Chriſtians or true Believers (as he calls them) have theſe Arguments of hope and fear ſtrongly applied; and hope and fear ſtrongly applied be the cauſes of actual will to adhere to this Doctrine; 'tis neceſſary all Chriſtians ſhould adhere to it, and impoſſible there ſhould be either Apoſtates or Hereticks. For if theſe cauſes be put in *all the faithfull actually cauſing* (as the Grounds of his Demonſtration ſuppoſe) and *indefectibleneſs* be *the proper and neceſſary effect of theſe cauſes*, as he alſo ſaith *, then it is impoſſible, that where theſe cauſes are put, there ſhould be any defection. For a proper and neceſſary effect cannot but be where the cauſes of ſuch an effect are put; eſpecially if they be put actually cauſing; and conſequently 'tis impoſſible that any ſingle Chriſtian ſhould ever either totally Apoſtatize or fall into Hereſie, *that is*, renounce Tradition.

* P. 60.

* P. 75.

§. 3. And that this is a genuine conſequence from theſe Principles (though he will not acknowledge it here, becauſe he ſaw it would ruine his Demonſtration) is liberally acknowledged by him in other parts of his Diſcourſe. For he tells us *, *That it exceeds all the power of nature (abſtracting from*

* P. 54.

from the cauſes of madneſs and violent diſeaſe) *to blot the knowledges of this Doctrine out of the ſoul of one ſingle Believer.* And * that *ſince no man can hold contrary to his knowledge, nor doubt of what he holds, nor change and innovate without knowing it doth ſo, it is a manifeſt impoſſibility a whole Age ſhould fall into an abſurdity ſo inconſiſtent with the nature of one ſingle man.* And *, That *it is perhaps impoſſible for one ſingle man to attempt to deceive poſterity* by renouncing Tradition. Which paſſages laid together amount to thus much, That it is impoſſible that Tradition ſhould fail in any one ſingle perſon. And though in the paſſage laſt cited he ſpeak faintly, and with a *perhaps*, as if he apprehended ſome danger in ſpeaking too peremptorily, yet any one would eaſily ſee the *laſt* to be as impoſſible as any of the reſt. And he himſelf elſewhere, being in the full Career of his Bombaſt Rhetorick, delivers it roundly without fear or wit *, *Sooner may the ſinews of entire nature by overſtraining crack, and ſhe loſe all her activity and motion, that is, her ſelf, than one ſingle part of that innumerable multitude which integrate that vaſt teſtification which we call Tradition can poſſibly be violated.*

* P. 78.

* P. 89.

* P. 54.

§ 4. But it may be we deal too hardly with him and preſs his Demonſtration too far, becauſe he tells us he onely intends by it to prove that the generality of Chriſtians will

will always adhere to Tradition. But if he intended to prove no more but this, he ſhould then have brought a Demonſtration that would have concluded no more; but this concludes of all as well as of the generality of Chriſtians: A clear evidence that it is no Demonſtration, becauſe it concludes that which is evidently falſe, That there can be no Apoſtates or Hereticks. Beſides, ſuppoſing his Demonſtration to conclude onely that the generality of Chriſtians would always adhere to Tradition, this is as plainly confuted by experience, if there be any credit to be given to Hiſtory. St. *Hierom* tells us *, That *Liberius* Biſhop of *Rome* (for all *his particular Title to Infallibility built upon Tradition*, as Mr. *S.* ſpeaks, *Coroll.* 28.) *turned Arian.* And that * *Arianiſm was eſtabliſh'd by the Synod of Ariminum*, which was a Council more general than that of *Trent.* And that * *almoſt all the Churches in the whole World under the names of Peace and of the Emperour, were polluted by Communion with the Arians.* Again, That * *under the Emperour* Conſtantius (Euſebius *and* Hippatius *being Conſuls*) *Infidelity was ſubſcribed under the names of Unity and Faith.* And * *that the whole World groaned and wonde red to ſee it ſelf turned Arian.* And he * uſes this as an argument to the *Luciferians*, to receive into the Church thoſe who had been defiled with the Hereſie of *Arius*, becauſe

* Chron. ad Annum Chriſt. 352.

*Ad. An. 363.

*Ad. An. 364.

* Adverſ. Lucifer.

* Ibid.

* Ibid.

cauſe the number of thoſe who had kept themſelves Orthodox, was ſo exceeding ſmall: *For* (ſays he) *the Synod of* Nice *which conſiſted of above Three hundred Biſhops, received Eight Arian Biſhops whom they might have caſt out without any great loſs to the Church; I wonder then how ſome, and thoſe the followers of the Nicene Faith can think that three Confeſſours* (*viz.* Athanaſius, Hilarius, Euſebius) *ought not to do that in caſe of neceſſity for the good and ſafety of the whole World, which ſo many and ſuch excellent Perſons did voluntarily.* It ſeems *Arianiſm* had prevailed very far, when St. *Hierom* could not name above three eminent Perſons in the Church who had preſerved themſelves untainted with it. Again *, Arius *in* Alexandria *was at firſt but one ſpark, but becauſe it was not preſently extinguiſh'd it broke out into a flame which devoured the whole World.* *Gregory Nazianzen* * likewiſe tells us to the ſame purpoſe, That *the Arian Hereſie ſeized upon the greateſt part of the Church.* And, to ſhew that he knew nothing of Mr. *S*'s Demonſtration of the indefectibility of the generality of Chriſtians, he asks *, *where are thoſe that define the Church by multitude, and deſpiſe the little Flock*, &c? And this Hereſie was of a long continuance, for from its firſt riſe which happened in the 20*th* year of *Conſtantine*, it continued (as *Joh. Abbas* hath calculated it) 266. years. And the *Pelagian*

* In Epiſt. ad Galat. l. 3.

* Orat. 20, & 21.

* Orat. 25.

* Chron. ad Annum octavum Maurit.

Pelagian Hereſie (if we may believe *Bradwardine*, one of the great Champions of the Church againſt it) did in a manner prevail as much as *Arianiſm*, as the ſaid *Authour* complains in his *Preface* to his *Book* *, That *almoſt the whole World was run after* Pelagius *into Errour*. Will Mr. *S.* now ſay, that in the height of theſe Hereſies *the generality of Chriſtians did firmly adhere to Tradition*? If he ſay they did, let him anſwer the expreſs *Teſtimonies* produced to the contrary: But if they did not, then his Demonſtration alſo fails as to the *generality of Chriſtians*. And if the greater part of Chriſtians may fall off from Tradition, what Demonſtration can make it impoſſible for the leſſer to do ſo? Who will ſay it is in Reaſon impoſſible that a *Thouſand* perſons ſhould relinquiſh Tradition, though *Nine hundred* of them have already done it, and though the remainder be no otherwiſe ſecured from doing ſo than thoſe were who have actually relinquiſh'd it? Now is not this a clear evidence that this which he calls a Demonſtration *à Priori*, is no ſuch thing? Becauſe every Demonſtration *à Priori*, muſt be from cauſes which are *neceſſary*, whereas his Demonſtration is from *voluntary* cauſes. So that unleſs he can prove that *voluntary* cauſes are *neceſſary*, he ſhall never demonſtrate that it is impoſſible for the generality of any company of men to err who have every one of them free-will, and are every

* Caus. Dei.

every one of them liable to paſſion and miſtake.

§ 5. From all this it appears, that his whole *Diſcourſe* about the Original and Progreſs of Hereſie, and the multitudes of Hereticks in ſeveral Ages, is as clear a confutation of his own Demonſtration as can be deſired. The onely thing that he offers in that *Diſcourſe*, to prevent this Objection which he foreſaw it liable to, is this, *It is not* (ſays he *) *to be expected but that ſome contingencies ſhould have place, where an whole Species in a manner is to be wrought upon; it ſufficeth that the cauſes to preſerve Faith indeficiently entire are as efficacious as thoſe which are laid for the preſervation of Mankind, the vertue of Faith not being to continue longer than Mankind its onely ſubject does; and they will eaſily appear as efficacious as the other, if we conſider the ſtrength of thoſe cauſes before explicated, and reflect that they are effectively powerfull to make multitudes daily debar themſelves of thoſe pleaſures which are the cauſes of Mankinds propagation; and if we look into Hiſtory for experience of what hath paſſed in the World ſince the propagating of Chriſtianity, we ſhall find more particulars failing in propagating their kind, than their Faith.* To which I anſwer,

* P. 65.

Firſt, That it may reaſonably be expected there ſhould be no contingencies in any particulars,

ticulars, where cauſes of actual will are ſuppoſed to be put in all: *Becauſe* (as he ſays truely) *a cauſe put actually cauſing cannot but produce its effect.* Suppoſe then conſtant cauſes laid in all Mankind of an actual will to ſpeak Truth to the beſt of their knowledge, were it not reaſonable to expect that there would be no ſuch contingency to the Worldsend as that any man ſhould tell a lye? Nay, it were madneſs for any man to think any ſuch contingency ſhould be, ſuppoſing cauſes actually cauſing men always to ſpeak Truth.

Secondly, It is far from Truth *that the cauſes to preſerve Faith indefficiently entire, are as efficacious as thoſe which are laid for the propagation of Mankind.* And whereas he would prove the ſtrength of theſe cauſes which are laid to preſerve Faith, becauſe they are *effectively powerfull to make multitudes daily debar themſelves of thoſe pleaſures which are the cauſes of mankinds propagation*; I hope no body that hath read the innumerable complaints which occur in their own Hiſtorians, and others of the beſt and moſt credible of their own Writers, of more than one Age, concerning the general vitiouſneſs and debauchery of their Prieſts and Monks, will be overforward to believe that all thoſe who debar themſelves of lawfull Marriage, do abſtain from thoſe unlawfull pleaſures.

§ 6. But nothing can be more impudent than what he adds, *That if we look into Hiſtories*

ſtories for experience of what hath paſt in the World ſince the firſt planting of Chriſtianity, we ſhall find far more particulars failing in propagating their kind, than their Faith. Do any Hiſtories confirm it to have been the experience of the World, that the far greateſt part of the World did in any Age give over propagating their kind? But Hiſtories do confirm that the far greateſt part of the Chriſtian World did fall off to *Arianiſm* and *Pelagianiſm*; and conſequently, as he ſuppoſeth, did deſert and renounce Tradition. Did ever whole Nations and vaſt Territories of the World either wholly, or for the far greateſt part of them, take up an humour againſt propagating Mankind? And yet both Hiſtory, and the experience of the preſent Age aſſures us, that a great part of *Aſia* and of *Africk* (where the moſt flouriſhing Churches in the World once were) are fallen off from *Chriſtianity*, and become either *Mahometans* or *Heathens*. In *Africk* almoſt all thoſe vaſt *Regions*, which Chriſtianity had gained from Heatheniſm, Mahometaniſm hath regained from Chriſtianity. All the North-part of *Africk* lying along the *Mediterranean* (where Chriſtianity flouriſh'd once as much as ever it did at *Rome*) is at this time utterly void of Chriſtians, excepting a few Towns in the hands of the European Princes. And not to mention all particular places, the large Region of *Nubia*, which had (as

is

is thought) from the Apoſtles time profeſſed the Chriſtian Faith, hath within theſe 150. years for want of Miniſters (as *Alvarez** tells us) quitted Chriſtianity, and is partly revolted to heatheniſm, partly fallen off to Mahometaniſm. So that it ſeems, that notwithſtanding the *Arguments of hope and fear*, the very Teachers of Tradition may fail in a largely extended Church. As for *Aſia*, in the *Eaſterly* parts of it, there is not now one Chriſtian to four of what there were 500 years ago; and in the more *Southerly* parts of it (where Chriſtianity had taken deepeſt root) the Chriſtians are far inferiour in number to the Idolaters and Mahometans, and do daily decreaſe. What thinks Mr. *S.* of all this? Have thoſe Chriſtian Nations which are turn'd Mahometans and Pagans failed in their Faith or not? If they have, I expect from him clear Inſtances of more that have failed in propagating their kind.

* Hiſt. Æthiop.

§ 7. But beſides thoſe who have totally Apoſtatized from Chriſtianity, hath not the whole *Greek* Church with the *Jacobites* and *Neſtorians*, and all thoſe other *Sects* which agree with and depend upon theſe, and which taken together are manifoldly greater than the *Roman* Church; I ſay, have not all theſe renounced Tradition for ſeveral Ages? And here in *Europe*, hath not a great part of *Poland*, *Hungary*, both *Germanies*, *France*, and *Switzerland*? Have not

the Kingdoms of great *Britain*, *Denmark*, *Sweden*, and a conſiderable part of *Ireland*, in Mr. *S*'s opinion deſerted Tradition? If I ſhould once ſee a whole Nation fail, becauſe no body would marry and contribute to the propagation of Mankind; and ſhould find this ſullen humour to prevail in ſeveral Nations, and to overſpread vaſt Parts of the World, I ſhould then in good earneſt think it poſſible for Mankind to fail; unleſs I could ſhew it impoſſible for other Nations to do that which I ſee ſome to have done, who were every whit as unlikely to have done it. So that whatever *cauſe* he aſſigns of *Hereſie**, as *Pride*, *Ambition*, *Luſt*, or any other vice or intereſt, if theſe can take place in whole Nations, and make them renounce Tradition, then where's *the efficacy of the cauſes to preſerve Faith indeficiently entire in any*? For the Demonſtration holds as ſtrongly for all Chriſtians as for any.

* P. 67.

§ 8. *Secondly*, From theſe grounds it would follow that no Chriſtian can live wickedly; becauſe the end of Faith being a good life, the arguments of hope and fear muſt in all Reaſon be as powerfull and efficacious cauſes of a good life, as of a true belief. And that his *Demonſtration* proves the one as much as the other, will be evident from his own reaſoning; for he * argues in this manner, *Good is the proper object of the will, good propos'd makes the will to deſire that good, and conſequently*

* P. 62.

consequently the known means to obtain it: Now infinite goods and harms sufficiently proposed are of their own nature incomparably more powerfull causes to carry the will than temporal ones. Since then, when two causes are counterpoised, the lesser when it comes to execution is no cause as to the substance of that effect, it follows that there is no cause to move the wills of a World of Believers to be willing to do that which they judge would lose themselves and their Posterity infinite goods, and bring them infinite harms, &c. in case a sufficient Proposal or Application be not wanting, which he tells us * is not wanting, * P. 63.
because *Christianity urged to execution, gives its followers a new life and a new nature, than which a nearer Application cannot be imagined.* Doth not this Argument extend to the lives of Christians, as well as their Belief? So that we may as well infer from these grounds, that it is impossible that those who profess Christianity should live contrary to it, as that they should fail to deliver down the Doctrine of Christ; because whatever can be an inducement and temptation to any man, to contradict this Doctrine by his practice, may equally prevail upon him to falsifie it. For why should men make any more scruple of damning themselves and their Posterity by teaching them false Doctrines, than by living wicked Lives? which are equally pernicious with Heretical Doctrines, not

onely upon account of the bad influence which ſuch examples of Fathers and Teachers are like to have upon their Scholars, but likewiſe they are one of the ſtrongeſt arguments in the world to perſuade them, that their Teachers do not themſelves believe that Religion which they teach; for if they did, they would live according to it. Why ſhould any man think, that thoſe arguments of hope and fear which will not prevail upon the generality of Chriſtians to make them live holy Lives, ſhould be ſo neceſſarily efficacious to make them ſo much concerned for the preſerving of a right Belief? Nay, we have great reaſon to believe that ſuch perſons will endeavour as much as may be, to bend and accommodate their Belief to their Lives. And this is the true ſource of thoſe Innovations in Faith for which we challenge the Church of *Rome*; which any man may eaſily diſcern, who will but conſider how all their new Doctrines are fitted to a ſecular Intereſt, and the gratifying of that inordinate appetite after riches and dominion which reigns in the Court of *Rome*, and in the upper part of the Clergy of that Church.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

§ 1. *Secondly*, The main grounds of his Demonſtration are apparently falſe: For, The ſecond Anſwer to his Demonſtration.

Firſt, This Demonſtration ſuppoſeth that the generality of Chriſtian Parents in all Ages perfectly underſtood the Doctrine of Chriſt, and did not miſtake any part of it; that they remembred it perfectly, and that they were faithfull and diligent to inſtruct their Children in it; which is as contrary to experience as that the generality of Chriſtians are knowing and honeſt. It ſuppoſeth likewiſe, that this Doctrine, and every ſubſtantial part of it, was received and remembred by the generality of Children as it was taught, and was underſtood perfectly by them without the leaſt material miſtake: So he tells us *, *That the ſubſtance of Faith comes clad in ſuch plain matters of Fact, that the moſt ſtupid man living cannot poſſibly be ignorant of it.* But whether this be reaſonable to be ſuppoſed or no, may eaſily be determined not onely from every man's own experience of the World, but from a more advantageous inſtance of the experience of the firſt Age of Chriſtianity. Was there ever a more knowing and diligent Teacher of this Doctrine than our Saviour? and yet his Diſciples fell into many miſtakes concerning it.

* P. 53.

So that in order to the certain propagating of it, the wisedom of God thought it requisite to endue even those who had learned this Doctrine from himself with an infallible spirit, by which they might be led into all Truth, and secured from errour and mistake; which had been unnecessary had it been impossible for them to mistake this Doctrine. The Apostles, who taught the World by an infallible Spirit, and with infinitely more advantage than ordinary Parents can teach their Children, yet in all the Churches which they planted they found Christians very apt to mistake and pervert their Doctrine, as appears by their frequent complaints in most of their Epistles. Nay the Apostle chargeth the Generality of the *Hebrews* * with such a degree of dulness and stupidity, that after fitting time and means of instruction they were still ignorant of the very Principles of Christianity: So he tells them, *That when for the time they ought to be Teachers of others, they had need that one should teach them again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* And St. *Hierom* tells us *, *That the Primitive Churches were tainted with many gross Errours whilst the Apostles were alive, and the bloud of Christ yet warm in* Judea. But it may be there have been better *Teachers* since, and *Children* are more apt to learn *now* than *Men* were *then.* Who knows how the World may be changed?

* Heb. 5. 11, 12.

* Adverſ. Luciferian.

§ 2. *Secondly,*

§ 2. *Secondly,* This Demonſtration ſuppoſeth the hopes and fears which Chriſtian Religion applies to Mens minds to be certain and neceſſary cauſes of actual will in Men to adhere to the Doctrine of Chriſt; and conſequently that they muſt neceſſarily adhere to it. That he ſuppoſeth them to be *neceſſary*, I have his own word for it; for he tells us *, That *he hath endeavoured to demonſtrate the indefectibleneſs of Tradition as the proper and neceſſary effect of thoſe cauſes which preſerve and continue Tradition on foot*, and what thoſe *cauſes* are he told to us before *, *That they are Hopes and Fears ſtrongly applied.* But I hope that the indefectibleneſs of Tradition cannot be a *neceſſary effect* of the ſtrong application of thoſe Hopes and Fears, unleſs thoſe Hopes and Fears be a *neceſſary cauſe* of that effect. And indeed this is ſufficiently implied in his ſaying *that they are the cauſes of actual will* in Chriſtians to adhere to Tradition. For if theſe *cauſes of actual will* be conſtant (as he muſt ſuppoſe) then they are certain and neceſſary and infallible cauſes of adhering to this Doctrine. For whatever is in act is neceſſary while it is ſo, and if it be conſtantly in act, the effect is always neceſſary. But what a wild Suppoſition is this, That Moral Motives and Arguments working upon a free Principle, the Will of Man, do neceſſarily produce their Effect? Is it neceſſary that the hopes of Hea-

* P. 75.

* P. 60.

ven, and the fears of Hell ſhould keep Chriſtians conſtant to the Doctrine of Chriſt? and is it not as neceſſary that theſe arguments ſhould prevail upon them to the practice of it? It is in vain to go about to demonſtrate that all men muſt be good who have ſufficient arguments propounded to them, when experience tells us the contrary. Nay, it is in reaſon impoſſible that Moral arguments ſhould be of a neceſſary and infallible efficacy, becauſe they are always propounded to a free Agent, who may chuſe whether he will yield to them or not. Indeed it is always reaſonable that men ſhould yield to them, and if they be reaſonable they will; but ſo long as they are free it can never be infallibly certain that they will. And if men be not free, it is no vertue at all in them to be wrought upon by theſe arguments. For what vertue can it be in any man to entertain the Chriſtian doctrine and adhere to it and live accordingly, if he does all this neceſſarily, *that is*, whether he will or no, and can no more chuſe whether he will do ſo or not, than whether he will ſee the light when the Sun ſhines upon his open eyes, or whether he will hear a ſound when all the Bells in the Town are Ringing in his ears, or (to uſe Mr. *S*'s * own ſimilitudes) whether he will *feel heat, cold, pain, pleaſure, or any other material quality* that *affects* his *ſenſes*. We ſee then how unreaſonable his Suppoſitions

* P. 53.

are,

are, and yet without theſe Grounds his Demonſtration falls. For if it be poſſible that Chriſtians may miſtake or forget the Doctrine of Chriſt, or any part of it, or be defective in diligence to inſtruct others in it; or if it be poſſible that the Will of man which is free, may not be neceſſarily and infallibly ſwayed by the arguments of hope and fear, then it is poſſible that Tradition may fail. And is not this a good Demonſtration which ſupports it ſelf upon ſuch Principles as do directly affront the conſtant experience, and the cleareſt reaſon of Mankind?

§ 3. And here I cannot but take notice how inconſiſtent he is to himſelf in laying the Grounds of Tradition's certainty. In one Part of his Book he tells us *, *That Tradition hath for its Baſis the beſt Nature in the Univerſe, that is, Man's; Not according to his Moral part, defectible by reaſon of Original Corruption; nor yet his Intellectuals, darkly groping in the purſuit of Science,* &c. *But according to thoſe Faculties in him perfectly and neceſſarily ſubject to the operations and ſtrokes of Nature, that is, his Eyes, Ears, Handling, and the direct impreſſions of knowledge, as naturally and neceſſarily iſſuing from the affecting thoſe ſenſes, as it is to feel heat, cold, pain, pleaſure, or any other material quality.* So that according to this Diſcourſe, the *Baſis of Tradition* is not *Man's Nature* conſidered as *Moral*, and capable of *Intel-*

* P. 53.

lectual

lectual Reflexion; for in this consideration it is *dark* and *defectible*: But *Man's Nature* considered onely as capable of *direct sensitive knowledge*, as acting *naturally and necessarily*. Which is to say, That Tradition is founded in the Nature of Man considered not as a Man but a Brute; under which consideration, I see no reason why he should call it *the best Nature in the Universe*. But now how will he reconcile this Discourse with the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration*? where he tells us, That the stability of Tradition is founded in the *Arguments of Hope and Fear*, the Objects of which being future and at a distance, cannot work upon a man immediately by *direct Impressions* upon his *senses*, but must work upon him by way of *Intellectual Reflexion* and *Consideration*. For I hope *he* will not deny but that the *Arguments of Hope and Fear* work upon man according to his Moral and Intellectual part, else how are they Arguments? And if man according to his *Moral part* be (as he says) *defectible*, how can the *indefectibility* of Tradition be founded in those Arguments which work upon man onely according to his *Moral part*? I have purposely all along (both for the Readers ease and mine own) neglected to take notice of several of his inconsistencies, but these are such clear and transparent Contradictions, that I could do no less than make an example of them.

SECT.

SECT. V.

§ 1. *Thirdly*, This Demonſtration is confuted by clear and undeniable *Inſtances* to the contrary. I will mention but *two*.

Firſt, The Tradition of the one true God, which was the eaſieſt to be preſerved of any Doctrine in the World, being ſhort and plain, planted in every man's Nature, and perfectly ſuted to the reaſon of Mankind. And yet this Tradition, not having paſt through many hands (by reaſon of the long Age of man) was ſo defaced and corrupted, that the World did lapſe into Polytheiſm and Idolatry. Now a man that were ſo hardy as to demonſtrate againſt matter of Fact, might by a ſtronger Demonſtration than Mr. *S*'s, prove that though it be certain this Tradition hath failed, yet it was impoſſible it ſhould fail; as *Zeno* demonſtrated the impoſſibility of motion againſt *Diogenes* walking before his eyes. For the Doctrine of the one true God *was ſetled in the heart of* Noah, *and firmly believed* by him *to be the way to happineſs, and the contradicting or deſerting of this, to be the way to miſery.* And this Doctrine was by him ſo taught to his Children, who were *encouraged* by theſe Motives *to adhere to this Doctrine*, and to propagate it to their Children, and *were deterred*

deterred by them from relinquiſhing it. And this was in all Ages the perſuaſion of the faithfull. Now the *Hopes* of Happineſs, and the *Fears* of Miſery *ſtrongly applied, are the cauſes of actual will. Beſides, the thing was feaſible, or within their power*; that is, *what they are bred to was knowable by them*, and that much more eaſily than any other Doctrine whatſoever, being ſhort, and plain, and natural. *This put, it follows as certainly that a great number in each Age would continue to hold themſelves, and teach their Children as themſelves had been taught*, that is, *would follow and ſtick to this Tradition of the one true God, as it doth that a cauſe put actually cauſing produceth its effect. Actually I ſay; for ſince the cauſe is put, and the Patient diſpoſed, it follows inevitably that the cauſe is put ſtill actually cauſing.* This demonſtration which concludes an apparent falſhood hath the whole ſtrength of Mr. *S*'s, and ſeveral advantages beyond it. For the Doctrine conveyed by this Tradition is the moſt important, being the firſt Principle of all Religion; the danger of corrupting it as great, the facility of preſerving it much greater, than of the Chriſtian Doctrine, for the cauſes before mentioned. And yet after all, it ſignifies nothing againſt certain experience, and unqueſtionable matter of Fact; onely it ſufficiently ſhews the vanity of Mr. *S*'s pretended Demonſtration built upon the ſame or weaker Grounds.

§ 2.

§ 2. *Secondly*, The other *Inſtance* ſhall be in the *Greek* Church, who received the Chriſtian Doctrine as entire from the Apoſtles, and had as great an obligation to propagate it truely to poſterity, and the ſame *fears and hopes ſtrongly applied to be the actual cauſes of will*; in a word, all the ſame Arguments and Cauſes to preſerve and continue Tradition on foot, which the *Roman* Church had: And yet, to the utter confuſion of Mr. *S*'s Demonſtration, Tradition hath failed among them. For as *Speculators*, they deny the *proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt from the Son*, and as *Teſtifiers* they diſown any ſuch Doctrine to have been delivered to them by the precedent Age, or to any other Age of their Church by the Apoſtles as the Doctrine of Chriſt.

§ 3. To this *Inſtance* of the *Greek* Church, becauſe Mr. *White* hath offered ſomething by way of anſwer, I ſhall here conſider it. He tells us *, *That the plea of the Greek Church is Non-Tradition, alledging onely this, That their Fathers do not deliver the Doctrine of the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt; not that they ſay the contrary, which clearly demonſtrates there are no oppoſite Traditions between them and us.* But this was not the thing Mr. *White* was concerned to do, to demonſtrate there were no oppoſite Traditions between the *Greeks* and the *Latines*, but to ſecure his main Demonſtration of the impoſſibility of Tradi-

* Apology for Tradition, p. 51.

Traditions failing againſt this *Inſtance*. For that the *Greeks* have no ſuch Tradition as this, *That the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Son*, is as good evidence of the failure of Tradition as if they had a poſitive Tradition, *That he proceeds onely from the Father*; eſpe-
*Phoc. Ep. 7. cially if we conſider that *they* * charge the *Latin* Church with *Innovation* in this matter, and ſay that the addition of that Clauſe, *of the Proceſſion from the Son alſo*, is a corruption of the ancient Faith, and a Deviliſh Invention. Why then does Mr. *White* go about to baffle ſo material an Objection (and, I fear his own Conſcience likewiſe) by a pitifull Evaſion inſtead of a ſolid Anſwer? What though there be no *oppoſite Traditions* between the *Greek* and *Latin* Church, yet if their Faith be oppoſite, will it not from hence follow that Tradition hath failed in one of them? I wonder that Mr. *White*, who hath ſo very well confuted the Infallibility of Popes and Councils, and thereby undermined the very Foundations of that Religion, ſhould not by the ſame light of Reaſon diſcover the fondneſs of his own Opinion concerning the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, which hath more and greater abſurdities in it than that which he confutes. And to ſhew Mr. *White* the abſurdity of it, I will apply his Demonſtration of the Infallibility of *Chriſtian* Tradition in general, to the *Greek* Church in particular; by which every one will ſee that it does as ſtrongly

ſtrongly prove the impoſſibility of Traditions failing in the *Greek* Church, as in the *Roman Catholick*, as they are pleaſed to call it. His Demonſtration is this *; *Chriſt commanded his Apoſtles to preach to all the World, and leſt any one ſhould doubt of the effect, he ſent his Spirit into them to bring to their remembrance what he had taught them; which Spirit did not onely give them a power to do what he enclined them to, but did cauſe them actually to do it.* I cannot but take notice by the way of the ill conſequence of this, which is, that men may doubt, whether thoſe who are to teach the Doctrine of Chriſt, will remember it, and teach it to others, unleſs they have that extraordinary and efficacious aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt which the Apoſtles had; if this be true, his Demonſtration is at an end, for he cannot plead that this aſſiſtance hath been continued ever ſince the Apoſtles. He proceeds, *The Apoſtles preached this Doctrine; the Nations underſtood it, lived according to it, and valued it as that which was neceſſary to them and their Poſterity incomparably beyond any thing elſe.* All this I ſuppoſe done to, and by the *Greeks* as well as any other Nation. *Theſe things being put, it cannot enter into any man's underſtanding, but that the Chriſtian* [Greeks] *of the firſt Age, being the Scholars of the Apoſtles, could and would earneſtly commend the Chriſtian Doctrine to their Poſterity; if ſo, it is evident that*

* De Fid. & Theol. Tract. 1. Sect. 4.

that they did. So that the continuance of the purity of the Faith in the [Greek] *Church is founded upon this, That Fathers always delivered the ſame Doctrine to their Children which they had received from their Fathers, and did believe it under this very Notion and Title as received; nor could any one* [of that Church] *deliver another Doctrine under this Title, but he would be convinced of a Lye by the reſt; and if the whole* [Greek] *Church ſhould endeavour to deliver a new Doctrine under that Title,* [and there's the ſame reaſon if they ſhould leave out any Article of the old Doctrine] *that whole Age would be in their Conſciences condemned of perfidiouſneſs and paricide. Now this is as impoſſible, as it is that all Mankind ſhould conſpire to kill themſelves.*

* Ibid. Sect. 5 And he afterwards * gives the reaſon why it is ſo impoſſible that Tradition ſhould fail, and it is a very bold and ſaucy one, *That if the Tradition of the Chriſtian Faith be more firm than the courſe of the Sun and Moon, and the propagation of Mankind, then God hath ſhewn himſelf an unskilfull Artificer.* What is there in all this Demonſtration, which may not be accommodated to the *Greek* Church with as much force and advantage as to the *Catholick?* Unleſs he can ſhew that it is very poſſible that all the Men in *Greece* may conſpire to kill themſelves, but yet abſolutely impoſſible that all the Men in the World ſhould do ſo; which I am ſure he

he cannot ſhew, unleſs he can demonſtrate, that though it be poſſible for a Million, of as wiſe Men as any are to be found in the World together, to conſpire to do a fooliſh action, yet it is impoſſible that an Hundred Millions not one jot wiſer than the other, ſhould agree together to the doing of it.

§ 4. From all this it appears, That Mr. *White*'s Anſwer to this Objection, doth not ſignifie any thing to his purpoſe. For if the *Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt*, was part of Chriſt's Doctrine, then it was delivered by the Apoſtles to the *Greek* Church; if ſo, they could not fail to deliver it down to the next Age, and that to the next, and ſo on; but it ſeems they have failed. Where then *is the force of hopes and fears ſtrongly applied? Where are the certain Cauſes of actual Will to adhere to this Doctrine?* Why is not the effect produced, *the Cauſes being put actually cauſing?* If the Apoſtles delivered this Doctrine, Oral Tradition is ſo clear and *unmiſtakable*, and * *brings down Faith clad in ſuch plain matters of Fact, that the moſt ſtupid man living* (much leſs the *Greeks*, that were the flower of Mankind) *could not poſſibly be ignorant of it*; *nay* *, *it exceeds all the power of Nature to blot Knowledges thus fixt out of the Soul of one ſingle Believer* (much more out of ſo vaſt a Church) And * *ſince no man can hold contrary to his knowledge, or doubt of what he holds, nor change*

* P. 53. & 54.

* Ibid.

* P. 78.

and innovate without knowing he did ſo, 'tis a manifeſt impoſſibility, a whole Church ſhould in any Age fall into an abſurdity ſo inconſiſtent with the nature of one ſingle man. And * ſince *'tis natural for every man to ſpeak Truth, and Grace is to perfect Nature in whatever is good in it, it follows that one truly Chriſtian heart is far more fixt to Veracity, than others not imbu'd with theſe heavenly Tenets* ; *and conſequently that a multitude of ſuch muſt incomparably exceed in point of teſtifying the ſame number of others, unfortified by Chriſt's Doctrine.* And ſince * *ſuch a thought cannot enter into the moſt depraved Nature, as to harm another without any good to himſelf, and yet this muſt be if we put Chriſtian Fathers miſteaching their Children unreceived Doctrines for received* (and I hope for the ſame reaſon, received Doctrines for unreceived) *contrary to their knowledge. For ſuppoſing Sanctity in the* (Greek) *Church* (and why may we not as well as in the *Latin*) *That is, that multitudes in it make Heaven their firſt love, and look on ſpiritual goods as their main concern,* &c. *it follows, that had the Fathers* of that Church *in any Age conſented to miſlead their Poſterity from what themſelves* (not only) *conceited* (but knew) *to be true, they ſhould do the moſt extreme harm imaginable to others without any the leaſt good to themſelves ; which is perhaps impoſſible in one ſingle man, more in few, but infinitely in a multitude, eſpecially of good men.*

* P. 86.

* P. 89.

§ 5. Thus

§ 5. Thus I might apply the reſt of his Ranting Rhetorick (but that I am weary of Tranſcribing it) concerning * *the natural love of Parents to their Children* (unleſs we ſuppoſe the *Greek* Church deſtitute of it) which muſt needs engage them to uſe the means proper to bring them to Heaven, and ſave them from Hell: As alſo concerning *the natural care men have of not loſing their Credit by telling pernicious Lyes.* And, not to omit the beſt part of his Demonſtration ** (which was therefore prudently reſerved to the laſt place) I might likewiſe ſhew *how the Principles of each Science, Arithmetick, Geometry, Logick, Nature, Morality, Hiſtorical Prudence, Politicks, Metaphyſicks, Divinity,* and laſt of all the new *Science* of *Controverſie* (as he calls it) or the bleſſed Art of Eternal wrangling and diſputing (*the firſt Principle* whereof (he tells us) is, *That Tradition is certain*) do all contribute to ſhew the certainty of Tradition, that is, the impoſſibility that any part of Chriſt's Doctrine ſhould fail in the *Greek* Church any more than in the *Latin.* And ſurely *Arithmetick, Geometry, Logick, Natural Philoſophy, Metaphyſicks,* &c. will all ſtand up for the *Greek Church* in this quarrel; for conſidering that *Greece* was the place where the *Arts* and *Sciences* were born and bred, it is not to be imagined that they ſhould be ſo diſingenuous and unnatural, as not to contribute their beſt aſſi-

* P. 90, 91.

** P. 93.

ſtance to the ſervice of their Countrey.

§ 6. But it may be the *Greeks* cannot ſo juſtly pretend to Oral Tradition as the *Latins*. What if St. *Peter*, the Head of the Apoſtles, thought fit to ſhare Scripture and Tradition between theſe two Churches, and laying his left hand on the *Greek* Church, and his right on the *Latin*, was pleaſed to confer *the great bleſſing of Oral Tradition* upon the *Latin* Church? which being to be the ſeat of Infallibility, it was but fitting that ſhe ſhould be furniſh't with this infallible way of conveying the Chriſtian Doctrine. And therefore it may be, that as the *Scriptures* of the New Teſtament were left in *Greek*, ſo *Oral Tradition* was delivered down only in *Latin*. This I confeſs is not altogether without ſome ſhew of reaſon: Mr. *S.* may do well to take the matter into his deeper conſideration; he hath in his time improved as weak probabilities as theſe into luſty Demonſtrations. And if he could but demonſtrate this, it would very much weaken the force of this *Inſtance* of the *Greek* Church; otherwiſe (for ought I ſee) this Inſtance will hold good againſt *him*; and whatever he can ſay for the impoſſibility of Tradition's failing in the *Latin* Church, may all be ſaid of the *Greek* Church, if he will but grant that the Apoſtles preached the ſame Doctrine to them both; that the arguments of hope and fear which this Doctrine contains in it, were

were applied as ſtrongly to the *Greeks* as the *Latins*. And yet notwithſtanding all this, Tradition hath plainly failed in the *Greek* Church. Let him now aſſign the Age wherein ſo vaſt a number of men conſpired to leave out the *Article* of the *Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt*; and ſhew how it was poſſible a whole Age could conſpire together to damn their Poſterity; or how the Faith of immediate Fore-fathers might be altered without any ſuch Conſpiracy; and we are ready to ſatisfie him how the Doctrine of the *Latin* Church might be corrupted and altered, and to tell him punctually in what Age it was done. And untill he do this, I would entreat him to trouble us no more with thoſe canting queſtions (wherein yet the whole force of his Demonſtration lies) How is it poſſible a whole Age ſhould conſpire to change the Doctrine of their Fore-fathers? And in what Age was this done? For if it be reaſonable to demand of us, in order to the overthrowing of his Demonſtration, to aſſign the particular Age wherein the *Latin* Church conſpired to change the ancient Doctrine; with the ſame reaſon we require of him, in order to the maintaining of his Demonſtration, to name the particular Age wherein the *Greek* Church conſpired to alter the Doctrine of Chriſt (which was undoubtedly in the firſt Age truly delivered to them by the Apoſtles) and alſo to ſhew from the rational force and

ſtrength of Tradition, how it is more impoſſible for the *whole Church* to have failed in tranſmitting the Doctrine of Chriſt down to us, or to have conſpired to the altering of it, than for ſuch a multitude of Chriſtians as is the vaſt body of the *Greek Church*. If Mr. *S.* or Mr. *White* ſhew this, they do ſomething; otherwiſe, I muſt tell them, that unleſs they can manage theſe *pretty things* they call *Demonſtrations* better, they muſt ſhortly either quit their Reaſon, or their Religion; or elſe return to the honeſt old *Mumpſimus* of the Infallibility of the Church from an extraordinary and immediate aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; or (to make the buſineſs ſhort, and ſtop all gaps with one Buſh) come over to the *Jeſuits*, and acknowledge the *Popes Infallibility* both in matters of *Faith* and *Fact*; by which means they may reconcile themſelves to *him*, and prevent that direfull ſtroke which threatens them from *Rome*, and is ready to cut them off from the Body of the *Traditionary Church*. And thus I have done with his *Firſt Demonſtration*; and I take it for a good ſign that the Popiſh Cauſe is at a very low Ebb, when ſuch *ſtuff* as this muſt be called *Demonſtration*.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

§ 1. I Come now to his *Demonſtration à Poſteriori*, which although it fall of it ſelf if the *Demonſtration à Priori* fail; yet becauſe it hath ſome peculiar abſurdities of its own, I ſhall conſider it by it ſelf as well as with relation to the other. Mr. S's Demonſtration *à Poſteriori.*

§ 2. Before he comes to lay it down with the *Grounds* of it, according to his uſual faſhion, he premiſeth ſomething as yielded by Proteſtants which, in his ſenſe, no Proteſtant ever granted. Juſt ſo he dealt with us before concerning the Scriptures, ſaying, That by them the Proteſtants *muſt mean unſenſed Letters and Characters.* But let us ſee what it is. * *That this Demonſtration* à Poſteriori, * P. 75. *ſeems a needleſs endeavour againſt the Proteſtants, who yield that thoſe Points in which we agree, as the Trinity, Incarnation,* &c. *came down by this way of Tradition; And this* (he ſaith) *no Proteſtant ever denied.* And then he asks, *Whether the ſame virtue of Tradition would not have been as powerfull to bring down other Points in which we do not agree, had any ſuch been?* Now if he ſpeak any thing to his own purpoſe, he muſt ſuppoſe Proteſtants to yield, that all thoſe Points wherein we are agreed, were conveyed down to us ſolely by Oral Tradition without Writing: But this all Proteſtants

teſtants deny. So that, that only which would avail his Cauſe againſt us, is to ſhew, that thoſe Points wherein we differ, have not only come down to us by Oral Teaching, but that they are likewiſe contained in Scripture, without which, we ſay, we can have no ſufficient certainty and aſſurance at this diſtance, that they were the Doctrine of Chriſt, and that they were not either totally innovated, or elſe corrupted in the conveyance from what they were at firſt. And if he can ſhew this concerning any Point in difference, I promiſe to yield it to him.

§ 3. I come now to his *Demonſtration*, which I ſhall ſet down in his own words with the *Principles* upon which it relies. * *The effect then we will pitch upon, and avow to be the proper one of ſuch a cauſe, is the preſent perſwaſion of Traditionary Chriſtians* (*or Catholicks*) *that their Faith hath deſcended from Chriſt and his Apoſtles uninterruptedly, which we find moſt firmly rooted in their heart; and the exiſtence of this perſwaſion we affirm to be impoſſible without the exiſtence of Traditions ever indeficiency to beget it. To prove this, I lay this firſt Principle; That Age, which holds her Faith thus delivered from the Apoſtles, neither can it ſelf have changed any thing in it nor know or doubt that any Age ſince the Apoſtles had changed or innovated therein. The ſecond Principle ſhall be this. No Age could innovate any thing, and withall deliver that*

* P. 77, 78.

that very thing to Posterity as received from Christ by continual Succession. The Sum of which is this, That because a present multitude of Christians (*viz.* the *Roman* Church) are perswaded, that Christ's Doctrine hath descended to them solely by an uninterrupted Oral Tradition, therefore this perswasion is an effect which cannot be attributed to any other cause but the indeficiency of Oral Tradition. For if neither the present Age, nor any Age before, could make any change or innovation, then the perswasion of the present Age is a plain Demonstration that this Doctrine was always the same, and consequently that Tradition cannot fail.

§ 4. In answer to this, I shall endeavour to make good these *Four* things,

First, That these *Principles* wholly rely upon the Truth of the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration à Priori.*

Secondly, That these *Principles* are not sufficiently proved by him.

Thirdly, That Doctrines and Practices, which must be acknowledged to have been innovated, have made the same pretence to uninterrupted Tradition.

Fourthly, That it is not the present perswasion of the Church of *Rome* (whom he calls the Traditionary Christians) nor ever was, that their Faith hath descended to them solely by Oral Tradition. If I can now make good these *Four* things, I hope his Demonstration is at an end.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

The *First* Answer to his second Demonstration.

§ 1. THat these *Principles* wholly rely upon the truth of the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration à Priori.* For if the Doctrine of Christ was either imperfectly taught in any Age, or mistaken by the Learners, or any part of it forgotten (as it seems the whole *Greek* Church have forgot that fundamental Point of the *Procession of the Holy Ghost*, as the *Roman* Church accounts it) or if the Arguments of hope and fear be not necessary causes of actual will to adhere to Tradition; then there may have been changes and innovations in any Age, and yet men may pretend to have followed Tradition. But I have shewn, that Ignorance, and Negligence, and Mistake, and Pride, and Lust, and Ambition, and any other Vice or Interest, may hinder those causes from being effectual to preserve Tradition entire and uncorrupted. And when they do so, it is not to be expected that those Persons, who innovate and change the Doctrine, should acknowledge that their new Doctrines are contrary to the Doctrine of Christ; but that they should at first advance them as Pious, and after they have prevailed and gained general entertainment, then impudently affirm that they were the very Doctrines which Christ delivered; which they may very securely

curely do, when they have it in their power to burn all that ſhall deny it.

§ 2. I will give a clear *Inſtance* of the poſſibility of this in the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*; by ſhewing how this might eaſily come in, in the Ninth or Tenth Age after Chriſt. We will ſuppoſe then that about this time, when univerſal Ignorance, and the genuine Daughter of it (call her Devotion or Superſtition) had over-ſpread the World, and the generality of People were ſtrongly enclined to believe ſtrange things; and even the greateſt Contradictions were recommended to them under the notion of Myſteries, being told by their Prieſts and Guides, that the more contradictious any thing is to Reaſon, the greater merit there is in believing it: I ſay, let us ſuppoſe, that in this ſtate of things, one or more of the moſt eminent then in the Church, either out of deſign, or out of ſuperſtitious ignorance and miſtake of the ſenſe of our Saviour's words uſed in the Conſecration of the Sacrament, ſhould advance this new Doctrine, That the words of Conſecration, *This is my Body*, are not to be underſtood by any kind of *Trope* (as the like forms in Scripture are, *as I am the Vine, I am the Door*, which are plain *Tropes*) but being uſed about this great Myſtery of the Sacrament ought in all reaſon to be ſuppoſed to contain in them ſome notable Myſtery; which they will do, if they be underſtood

ſtood of a real change of the ſubſtance of Bread and Wine, made by virtue of theſe words, in the real Body and Bloud of our Saviour. And in all this, I ſuppoſe nothing but what is ſo far from being impoſſible, that it is too uſual, for men either out of Ignorance or Intereſt, to advance new Opinions in Religion. And ſuch a Doctrine as this was very likely to be advanced by the ambitious *Clergy* of that time, as a probable means to draw in the People to a greater veneration of them; which advantage Mr. *Ruſhworth* * ſeems to be very ſenſible of, when he tells us, That the power of the Prieſt in this particular, is *ſuch a privilege, as if all the learned Clerks that ever lived ſince the beginning of the World, ſhould have ſtudied to raiſe, advance, and magnifie ſome one ſtate of men to the higheſt pitch of Reverence and Eminency, they could never (without ſpecial light from Heaven) have thought of any thing comparable to this.* I am of his mind, that it was a very notable device, but (I am apt to think) invented *without any ſpecial light from Heaven.* Nor was ſuch a Doctrine leſs likely to take and prevail among the *People* in an Age prodigiouſly ignorant, and ſtrongly enclined to Superſtition, and thereby well prepared to receive the groſſeſt Abſurdities under the notion of Myſteries; eſpecially if they were ſuch as might ſeem to conciliate a greater honour and reverence

* Dial. 1. Sect. 4.

to

to the Sacrament. Now ſuppoſing ſuch a Doctrine as this, ſo fitted to the humour and temper of the Age, to be once aſſerted, either by chance, or out of deſign; it would take like wild-fire: eſpecially if by ſome one or more who bore ſway in the Church, it were but recommended with convenient gravity and ſolemnity. And although Mr. *Ruſhworth* ſays *, It is *impoſſible that the Authority of one man* ſhould ſway ſo much in the World, becauſe (ſays he) *ſurely the Devil himſelf would rather help the Church, than permit ſo little pride among men*; yet I am not ſo thoroughly ſatisfied with this cunning reaſon: For though he delivers it confidently, and with a *ſurely*, yet I make ſome doubt whether the Devil would be ſo forward to help the Church; nay, on the contrary, I am enclined to think that he would rather chuſe to connive at this humble and obſequious temper in men, in order to the overthrow of Religion, than croſs a deſign ſo dear to him by unſeaſonable temptations to pride: So that notwithſtanding Mr. *Ruſhworth*'s reaſon, it ſeems very likely that ſuch a Doctrine, in ſuch an Age, might eaſily be propagated by the influence and authority of one or a few great Perſons in the Church. For nothing can be more ſutable to the eaſie and paſſive temper of ſuperſtitious Ignorance, than to entertain ſuch a Doctrine with all imaginable greedineſs, and to maintain it with

* Dial. 3. Sect. 7.

with a proportionable zeal. And if there be any wiſer than the reſt, who make Objections againſt it as if this Doctrine were new and full of contradictions, they may eaſily be born down by the ſtream, and by the eminency and authority and pretended ſanctity of thoſe who are the heads of this Innovation. And when this Doctrine is generally ſwallowed, and all that oppoſe it are looked upon and puniſhed as Hereticks, then it is ſeaſonable to maintain that this Doctrine was the doctrine of Forefathers; to which end it will be ſufficient to thoſe who are willing to have it true, to bend two or three ſayings of the Ancients to that purpoſe. And as for the contradictions contained in this Doctrine, it was but telling the People then (as they do in effect now) that contradictions ought to be no ſcruple in the way of Faith: that the more impoſſible any thing is, 'tis the fitter to be believed: that it is not praiſe-worthy to believe plain poſſibilities, but this is the gallantry and heroical power of Faith, this is the way to oblige God Almighty for ever to us, to believe flat and down-right contradictions: For *God requires at the Peoples hands* (as Mr. *Ruſhworth* * tells us) *a Credulity of things above and beyond Nature; nay, beyond all the Fables, be it ſpoken with reſpect, that ever man invented.* After this Doctrine hath proceeded thus far, and by the moſt inhumane ſeverities and cruelties ſuppreſt

* Dial. 1. Sect. 4.

ſuppreſt Diſſenters, or in a good meaſure rooted them out; then if they pleaſe even this new word *Tranſubſtantiation* may pretend alſo to Antiquity, and in time be confidently vouched for a word uſed by Chriſtians in all Ages, and tranſmitted down to them by thoſe from whom they received the Doctrine of the Sacrament, as *a term of Art* appendant to it. And when a ſuperſtitious Church and deſigning Governours have once gained this Poſt, and by means of this enormous Article of *Tranſubſtantiation* have ſufficiently debauched the minds of men, and made a breach in their underſtandings wide enough for the entertaining of any Errour, though never ſo groſs and ſenſleſs; then Innovations come in a-main, and by ſholes; and the more abſurd and unreaſonable any thing is, it is for that very reaſon the more proper matter for an Article of Faith. And if any of theſe Innovations be objected againſt, as contrary to former belief and practice, it is but putting forth a luſty act of Faith, and believing another contradiction, that though they be contrary yet they are the ſame.

§ 3. And there is nothing in all this, but what is agreeable both to Hiſtory and Experience. For that the Ninth and Tenth Ages, and thoſe which followed them till the Reformation, were thus prodigiouſly ignorant and ſuperſtitious, is confirmed by the unanimous

unanimous conſent of all Hiſtories; and even by thoſe Writers, that have been the greateſt Pillars of their own Religion. And Experience tells us, that in what Age ſoever there are a great company of ſuperſtitious People, there will never be wanting a few crafty Fellows to make uſe of this eaſie and pliable humour to their own ends. Now that this was the ſtate of thoſe Ages of the Church, will be evident to any from theſe Teſtimonies. *Platina* * writes of Pope *Romanus*, that he null'd the Acts of his Predeceſſour *Stephanus*; *For* (ſays he) *theſe Popes minded nothing elſe but how they might extinguiſh both the Name and Dignity of their Predeceſſours.* And if ſo, who can doubt, but that theſe Popes who made it their buſineſs to deſtroy the very memory of their Anceſtours, would be very little carefull to preſerve the Doctrine of Fore-fathers. But what the care of thoſe Times was in this particular, may be conjectured from what *Onuphrius* * ſays by way of confutation of that *paſſage* in *Platina*, concerning Pope *Joan*'s reading publickly at *Rome* at her firſt coming thither. *This* (ſays he) *is utterly falſe, for there was nothing that they were leſs ſolicitous about in thoſe Times, than to furniſh the City with any publick Teachers.* And the Time which *Onuphrius* ſpeaks of, was much about the beginning of the Tenth Century. *Phil. Bergomenſis* * ſays, *It happened*

* In Vit. Romani, Papæ 117. A. C. 900.

* In Platin.

* Anno 306.

pened in that Age through the ſlothfulneſs of men, that there was a general decay of Vertue both in the Head and Members. Again *, *These Times through the Ambition and cruel Tyranny of the Popes were extremely unhappy —For the Popes ſetting aſide the fear of God and his worſhip, fell into ſuch enmities among themſelves, as cruel Tyrants exerciſe towards one another.* Sabellicus * ſays, *It is wonderfull to obſerve what a ſtrange forgetfulneſs of all Arts did about this time ſeize upon men; inſomuch that neither the Popes, nor other Princes ſeem'd to have any ſenſe or apprehenſion of any thing that might be uſefull to humane life. There were no wholſome Laws, no Reparations of Churches, no purſuit of Liberal Arts; but a kind of ſtupidity and madneſs and forgetfulneſs of manners had poſſeſſed the minds of men.* And a little after, *I cannot* (ſays he) *but much wonder, from whence theſe Tragical Examples of Popes ſhould ſpring; and how their minds ſhould come to be ſo devoid of all Piety, as neither to regard the Perſon which they ſuſtained, nor the place they were in.* *Sigonius* * ſpeaking of theſe Times, about the beginning of the Tenth Century, calls them *the fouleſt and blackeſt, both in reſpect of the wickedneſs of Princes, and the madneſs of the People, that are to be found in all Antiquity,* *Genebrard* * ſpeaking of the ſame Time, *This* (ſays he) *is called the unhappy Age; being deſtitute of men eminent for Wit*

* Anno 9. 8

* Ennead. 9 L. 1. Anno 900.

* De Regn. Ital. L. 6.

* Chron. L. 4.

and Learning, as alſo of famous Princes and Popes. In this Time there was ſcarce any thing done worthy to be remembred by Poſterity. And he adds afterwards, *But chiefly unhappy in this one thing, that for almoſt 150 years together, about 50 Popes, did utterly degenerate from the vertue of their Anceſtours.* He ſhould have added farther, but even to a miracle *happy* in another reſpect, that during this long and total degeneracy from the Piety and Vertue of their Anceſtours, they did not in the leaſt ſwerve from them in matter of Faith and Doctrine: A thing incredible, were there not *Demonſtration* for it. *Werner* * gives this Character of that Time; *About the year of our Lord One Thouſand, there began an effeminate Time, in which the Chriſtian Faith began to degenerate exceedingly, and to decline from its ancient vigour*; inſomuch *that in many Countries of Chriſtendom, neither Sacraments nor Eccleſiaſtical Rites were obſerved—And people were given to Soothſaying and Witchcrafts, and the Prieſt was like the People.* It ſeems by this Teſtimony, that Tradition did faulter a little in that Age, elſe the *Chriſtian Faith* could not poſſibly have degenerated and declined ſo very much: And (which threatens Mr. *S*'s Demonſtration moſt of all) that the *Practical* Tradition of *Sacraments*, and other *Eccleſiaſtical Obſervances* did fail in *many Chriſtian Countries.* *Gerbert* *, who lived

* Faſcic. Tempor.

* Epiſt. 40.

lived in that Time, gives this ſhort Character of the *Roman* Church, in an Epiſtle of his to *Stephen* Deacon of that Church, *The World ſtands amazed at the Manners of* Rome. But moſt full is the complaint of a great *Prelate* of the Church * concerning thoſe Times; *In the Weſt* (ſays he) *and almoſt all the World over (eſpecially among thoſe who were called the Faithfull) Faith failed, and there was no fear of God among them:* (it ſeems the Argument of Fear had loſt its force) *Juſtice was periſhed from among men, and violence prevailing againſt equity governed the Nations. Fraud, Deceit, and the Arts of Cozenage were grown univerſal. All kind of Vertue gave way as an uſeleſs thing, and wickedneſs ſupply'd its place. The World ſeemed to be declining apace towards its Evening, and the ſecond coming of the Son of man to draw near: For love was grown cold, and Faith was not found upon Earth. All things were in Confuſion, and the World looked as if it would return to its old Chaos.——All ſorts of Fornication were committed with the ſame freedom as if they had been lawfull Actions; for men neither bluſhed at them, nor were puniſh'd for them.——Nor did the Clergy live better than the People.——For the Biſhops were grown negligent of the Duty of their place,* &c. *In a word, men ran themſelves headlong into all Vice, and all Fleſh had corrupted its way.* And farther to ſhew the great neglect of

* Bell. Sacr. L. 1. c. 8.

Prieſts and Biſhops in the work of Teaching and Inſtruction (which is ſo neceſſary to the preſerving of Tradition inviolable) I will add the Teſtimony of one * who lived in thoſe Times; who tells us. *That in thoſe days, the Prieſts and Biſhops, who ought to have been the Pillars of the Church, were ſo negligent that they did not mind the Divine Scripture; nor take any care to teach and inſtruct Scholars that might ſucceed them, as we read holy Men had uſed to do, who left many Scholars perfectly inſtructed to be their Succeſſours.* If they had onely neglected the Scriptures, all might have been well enough; but it ſeems they took no care to inſtruct people in the way of *Oral Tradition*, nor to furniſh the Church with a new Generation of able Teachers who might *deliver down from hand to hand the ſenſe and faith of Fore-fathers.* This laſt Teſtimony, the late Learned Lord Primate of *Ireland*, Biſhop *Uſher* (in his Book *De Chriſtian. Eccleſ. Succeſs*, &c. * where ſeveral of the Teſtimonies I have produced, with many more to the ſame purpoſe, may be ſeen) cites out of a *M. S.* in *Emmet* College Library in *Cambridge*; concerning the authority of which *M. S.* there need be no diſpute between *Mr. S.* and me; becauſe the whole force and effect of this Teſtimony is ſufficiently contained in thoſe Citations which I have brought out of publick and unqueſtionable Books.

* Elfric. Ser. ad Sacerdot.

* C. 2. & 3.

§ 4. All

§ 4. All these Testimonies which I have produced are, in general and for the substance of them, confirmed by *Two* of the greatest Props of the *Romish* Church; *Bellarmine*, and *Baronius*. *Bellarmine* * says of this Tenth Age, *That there was never any either more unlearned or more unhappy*. *Baronius* * speaks more particularly, *What was then the face of the Roman Church? How deformed? When Whores, no less powerfull than vile, bore the chief sway at* Rome; *and at their pleasure changed Sees, appointed Bishops; and (which it is horrible to mention) did thrust into St.* Peter's *See their own Gallants, false Popes, who would not have been mentioned in the Catalogue of the Roman Popes, but onely for the more distinct Recording of so long a Succession of Times.* And a little after, *Christ was then (it seems) in a very deep sleep——And which was worse; when the Lord was thus asleep there were no Disciples to awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep. What kind of Cardinal Presbyters and Deacons can we think were chosen by these Monsters, when nothing is so natural as for every one to propagate his own likeness?* It is very much that these lewd Women, and their Favourite-Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops who then swayed the Church, should, when they were so careless of their own Souls, be so tender of the salvation of Posterity; and when they administred all other affairs of the Church so extravagantly, should

* De Rom. Pontif. L. 4. c. 12.

* Ann. Tom. 10. An. 900.

be ſo carefull of the *main chance*, as to tranſmit the Chriſtian Doctrine entire and uncorrupted to ſucceeding Ages. Yet Mr. *S.* hath demonſtrated this *à Poſteriori*, which ſeems ſo very ſtrange to a man that conſiders things *à Priori*.

§ 5. But it may be, this diſmal ſtate of the *Roman* Church laſted but a little while; and ſhe did in the ſame Age, before Tradition could be interrupted, recover her ſelf out of this degenerate condition. I will therefore enquire a little into the ſtate of ſucceeding Times. And I find in the Thirteenth *Century*, St. *Bernard* * complaining, That the degeneracy of the Prieſts was in his days greater than ever; *We cannot* (ſays he) *now ſay, as is the People ſo is the Prieſt; for the People are not ſo bad as their Prieſts.* In the Fifteenth *Century*, *Nic. de Clemangiis*, who lived in that Time, wrote a Book upon this argument, *Of the corrupt ſtate of the Church*; by which we may make ſome judgment whether in that Age it was (as Mr. *S.* ſays) impoſſible but that the Chriſtian Doctrine ſhould be entirely preſerved, and faithfully and diligently taught. He ſays * there was an univerſal degeneracy in the Church, *from the very Head of it to its loweſt Members.* In the ſame *Chapter* he complains, *Who is there that preaches the Goſpel to the People? Who ſhews them the way to Salvation either by Word or Action?* It ſeems

* In Converſ. Sancti Pauli. Serm. 1.

* C. 3.

eems there was a great failure both of *Oral* and *Practical* Tradition. Again *, ſpeaking of the Pope's taking to himſelf the Collation of all vacant Biſhopricks and Dignities; he ſays, one might think the Pope did this, *that the Church might be provided of worthier Governours, both in reſpect of their Learning, and their lives, did not the thing it ſelf declare the contrary, and that ignorant and uſeleſs Perſons (provided they had money) were by Simony advanced to the higheſt degrees in the Church.* And *, ſpeaking what a vaſt number of Candidates there was uſually at *Rome* from all Parts waiting for Benefices and Dignities, he tells us, That many of theſe *did not come from their Studies, or from Schools of Learning, to govern Pariſhes? but from the Plow, and from the meaneſt Profeſſions: and that they underſtood Latin and Arabick much at the ſame rate; and many of them could not read at all. But it may be* (ſays he) *their manners were ſuch as might be ſome excuſe for their Ignorance. No; though their Learning was but little, their Vertue was leſs; for being brought up in Idleneſs, they followed nothing but Debauchery and Sports*, &c. *Hence it comes to paſs, that in all places there are ſo many wicked, and wretched, and ignorant Prieſts.——Hence it is that Prieſts are ſo contemned by the common People.——Formerly the Prieſthood was highly honoured by the People, and nothing was more ve-*

* C. 5.

* C. 6.

nerable than that Order of men; but now nothing is more vile and deſpicable. —

* C. 9. * *I make no doubt, but there are now more Thieves and Robbers, than true Paſtours in*

* C. 11. *the Church.* — * *Why ſhould any man now flatter himſelf with hopes of Preferment, becauſe of his Vertue or Learning? Men do not now (as formerly) riſe in the Church by*

* C. 13. *ſuch Arts* — * *Which of thoſe that are now adays advanced to the Pontifical Dignity, hath ſo much as perfunctorily read, or heard, or learn't the Scriptures; yea, or ever touched any more than the cover of the Bible?* A-

* C. 14. gain *, ſpeaking of the prodigious Covetouſneſs of the Governours of the Church, and the groſs neglect of their Flocks, *They would* (ſays he) *much more contentedly bear the loſs of ten thouſand Souls, than of ten or twelve Shillings. But why do I ſay more contentedly? When without the leaſt trouble or diſturbance to themſelves, they can bear the loſs of Souls; a thing ſo far from their care, that it never entred into their thoughts.* Had the *Hereticks* of thoſe days but had Wit enough, and a little Money, they might (it ſeems) for a ſmall Sum have hired the Governours of the Church to have renounced Tradition, or to have ceaſed to propagate it; though they had known that in ſo doing they ſhould have damned all their Poſterity. He goes on, and tells us, *That if there were perhaps any one who did not take theſe courſes, the reſt would*

would all ſnarle at him, call him Fool, and ſay he was unfit to be a Prieſt. —So that the ſtudy of the Scriptures (together with the Profeſſours of it) was turned into laughter and ſcorn by all; but (which is prodigious) eſpecially by the Popes, who prefer their own Traditions many degrees before the Commands of God. I deſire Mr. *S.* to take notice in what kind of Times *Tradition* was ſet up againſt Scripture. Again *, ſpeaking of the choice of perſons to be Prieſts, he tells us, *That there was no enquiry made into their Lives, no queſtion about their Manners: As for their Learning* (ſays he) *what need I ſpeak of that? When we ſee the Prieſts, almoſt univerſally, have much ado to read, though but in an hæſitating and ſpelling faſhion, drawing out one ſyllable after another, without underſtanding either the ſenſe of what they read, or the words.* I am now reconciled to *oral Tradition*, and convinced that there was great need of it in thoſe Ages in which ſcarce any of the Prieſts could either write or read. I omit the particulars of what he ſays * concerning the *common Drunkenneſs and Incontinency of Prieſts, who* (becauſe they made Conſcience of Marriage) *kept Whores in their Houſes*; concerning the diſſolute Lives of *Monks*; and concerning *Nunneries*, which inſtead of being *the Sanctuaries of God, were the abominable Stews of* Venus, *and the Receptacles of laſcivious young men*; inſomuch (ſays

* C. 16.

* C. 20, 21, 23.

(ſays he) *that at this day it is the ſame thing to put a Virgin into a Nunnery, and to make her a common Strumpet.* And to ſhew that he does not ſpeak theſe things of a few, but with relation to the general corruption of that Age, he adds *, *That wickedneſs did ſo abound in all Orders of men, that ſcarce one among a thouſand was to be found who did truely live up to his Profeſſion: And if there was any one that did not follow theſe lewd courſes, he became ridiculous to others, and was branded either as an inſolent ſingular Mad man, or an Hypocrite.* I will conclude this long Teſtimony with the character which he gives * of one of the Popes of his time, *Clement* by name, *viz. That he did chiefly apply himſelf to gratifie and oblige all the Paraſites and Buffoons that had any intereſt in the ſeveral Courts of Princes: And to this end, did confer upon theſe, and upon handſome young Boys (which he much delighted in) almoſt all the vacant Biſhopricks, and moſt of the other Church Dignities.* It is well that *oral Tradition* hath the ſecurity of *infallibility*, otherwiſe it had in all *probability* been loſt among this lewd ſort of People, which yet they gravely call the *Holy Roman-Catholick Church.*

* C. 25.

* C. 27.

§ 6. To

§ 6. To this effect I might have produced Teſtimonies concerning every Age from the *Ninth* to the *Sixteenth*; but Mr. *Creſſy* hath ſaved me that labour, who acknowledges *, that *theſe worſt times of the Church, when Ignorance, Worldlineſs, Pride, Tyranny, &c. reigned with ſo much ſcope: When the Popes (ſo wicked, ſo abominable in their Lives) enjoyed ſo unlimitted a power even over ſecular Princes themſelves, and much more over the Clergy:* I ſay, he acknowledges that theſe *worſt times* continued during the ſpace *of about ſix Ages before* Luther: A competent time (one would think) for Tradition to have miſcarried in, were it not (as Mr. *S.* ſays) *indefectible*. Mr. *Creſſy* indeed tells us *, That this *was to him an irrefragable Teſtimony of a ſtrange watchfulneſs of Divine Providence over the Church, to preſerve it from the Gates of Hell (that is, eſtabliſhed and dangerous Errors) during theſe worſt times.* And very likely it is that this might appear ſo to ſuch a *Catholick whoſe judgment*, he tells us, *it is to renounce his own judgment:* but it will never appear *irrefragable*, to any man that hath his judgment about him, unleſs Mr. *Creſſy* can prove, that by that phraſe, *viz. the Gates of Hell*, the Scripture does not mean groſs wickedneſs of Life, as well as *dangerous errors* in Opinion; and likewiſe, that a general vitiouſneſs and debauchery of Manners is not as pernicious to Chriſtianity, and

* Exomolog. C. 68.

* Ibid.

and as deſtructive to the end of it, as *eſtabliſh'd Errors* in Doctrine: And if ſo, that the Providence of God is not equally concerned to preſerve the Church from things equally pernicious. When he hath proved theſe three things, then this Declamatory diſcourſe of his may ſignifie ſomething, but not before.

§ 7. Now if this be a true repreſentation of the ſtate of the *Roman* Church in thoſe Ages, was not this a very fit time for the Devil to play his Pranks in? Will any man that reads theſe Teſtimonies, think it impoſſible that the Doctrine of Chriſt ſhould have been depraved in this Age; or that the moſt ſenſleſs and abſurd Tenets might then be brought in under the notion of Chriſtian Doctrines? When ſcarce any one knew what the Doctrine of Chriſt was: When a general ignorance of Letters, and almoſt an univerſal ſtupidity and madneſs had ſeized upon the minds of men: When there was a horrid depravation of manners, and a general failure of Vertue and Piety both in the Head and Members of the Church: When the lives of the Popes were Tragically wicked, and no footſteps of Piety appeared in them: When for about 150 years together, in a continued ſucceſſion of 50 Popes, there was ſcarce one pious and vertuous Man (or Woman) ſate in that Chair: When the *Whores* governed *Rome*, and put out, and put in Biſhops at their

their pleaſure; and made their own *Gallants* Popes, who would be ſure to make a College of Cardinals of ſuch Monſters as themſelves: When *pretty Boys*, and *Paraſites*, and *Buffoons* led the Head of the Church by the Noſe, and were gratified with the Beſt Biſhopricks and Dignities in the Church: When there was a general decay of knowledge, and defection of the Chriſtian Faith: When in many Countreys neither Sacraments, nor other Eccleſiaſtical Rites were obſerved: When Violence and Fraud, and all the Arts of Deceit and Couzenage, and blacker Arts than theſe, were the common ſtudy and practice: When Intemperance, and all kind of Lewdneſs and Debauchery, reigned in all ſorts and orders of men: When the generality of Biſhops and Prieſts (who, according to Mr. *Ruſhworth* *, can only teach the Traditionary Doctrine) were ignorant in the Scriptures and in every thing elſe (very few of them being able ſo much as to read tolerably) and did neglect to teach the People, and to breed up any in knowledge to ſucceed them in their Office; and in the lewdneſs of their Lives did ſurpaſs the Vileſt of the People. Was not ſuch an Age a fit ſeaſon to plant the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* in? Or if any thing more monſtrous than that can be imagined, it might then have taken place; for what Weeds would not have grown in ſo rank a Soil? Doth Mr. *S.* think it impoſſible, that

* Dial. 3. Sect. 3.

that thoſe that were born in the Church then, ſhould be ignorant of the Doctrine of Chriſt, when ſcarce any one would take the pains to teach it them; or that it could then have been altered, when ſo few underſtood, and fewer practiſed it: When prodigious Impiety and Wickedneſs did overſpread the Church, from the Pope down to the meaneſt of the Laity, can any one believe that men generally made Conſcience to inſtruct their Children in the true Faith of Chriſt? Was it impoſſible there ſhould be any neglect of this Duty, when all others failed? That there ſhould be any miſtake about the Doctrine of Chriſt, when there was ſo much Ignorance? unleſs he be of Mr. *Ruſhworth's* * mind, who reckons *Ignorance* among *the Parents of Religion.* Where were then the *Arguments of Hope and Fear*? Were they *ſtrongly applied*, or were they not? Were they *cauſes of actual will* in Chriſtians to believe well, when they lived ſo ill? Or is Chriſtianity only fitted to form mens minds to a right belief, but of no efficacy to govern their Lives? Hath Chriſt taken care to keep his Church from Error, but not from Vice? As the great Cardinal *Perron* * (ſtooping below his own Wit and Reaſon to ſerve a bad Cauſe) tells us, *That the Church ſings, and will ſing to the end of the World, I am black, but I am fair; that is to ſay, I am black in Manners, but fair in Doctrine:* As if the meaning of the Prophe-

* Dial. 3. Sect. 7.

* Reply to K. James. l. 4. c. 5.

ciss

cies and Promiſes of Scripture made to the Church were this, that by the extraordinary care of God's Providence, and peculiar aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, ſhe ſhould be wicked, but Orthodox to the end of the World. Where were then the *vigorous cauſes imprinting* Chriſt's Doctrine, and continuing it more particularly at *Rome* than any where elſe; and of ſecuring that *See* and its *ſupreme Paſtor* in the faith and practice of the Chriſtian Doctrine, above any other See or Paſtor whatſoever? Who is ſo little verſed in Hiſtory, as not to underſtand the diſmal ſtate of Religion in the *Romiſh* Church, in thoſe times? Who does not know what advantages the Biſhops of *Rome*, and their ſervile Clergy made of the Ignorance and Superſtition of thoſe and the ſucceeding Ages; and by what Arts and Steps they raiſed themſelves to that power which they held in the Church for a long while after? When they could tread upon the Necks of Princes; and make a great King walk bare-foot, and yield himſelf to be ſcourged by a company of petulant Monks: When they could ſend any man upon an Errand to viſit the Holy Sepulchre, or the Shrine of ſuch a Saint; and command five or ſix Kings with great Armies upon a needleſs Expedition into the Holy Land, that ſo during their abſence they might play their own Game the better: When they could mint Miracles, and impoſe upon the belief

of

of the People (without the authority of any ancient Books) abſurd and counterfeit Tales of ancient Saints and Martyrs, as delivered down to them by *Tradition*; and could bring that foppiſh Book the *Legend*, almoſt into equal Authority and Veneration with the *Bible*; and perſwade the eaſie people that St. *Denys* carried his own head in his hand after it was cut off two Miles, and kiſs'd it when he laid it down. Any one that ſhall but reflect upon the monſtrous practices of the *Roman* Biſhops and Clergy in theſe Ages, the ſtrange Feats they played, and what abſurdities they impoſed upon the ſuperſtitious credulity of Princes and People, may readily imagine not only the poſſibility, but the eaſineſs of innovating new Doctrines as they pleaſed, under the ſpecious pretences of Antiquity, and conſtant and uninterrupted Tradition.

§ 8. And this kind of Diſcourſe concerning the poſſibility of Errors coming into the Church, is not, as Mr. *White* ridiculouſly compares it *, as if an *Orator* ſhould go about to perſwade people, that *George, by the help of a long ſtaff, and a* nimble *caſt of his body*, and ſuch like advantages, *might leap over* Paul's *Steeple; never conſidering all the while the diſproportion of all theſe advantages to the height of the Steeple: ſo* (ſaith he) *he that diſcourſeth at large how Errors uſe to ſlide into Man's Life, without comparing the power of the cauſes of Error to the ſtrength of reſiſting,*

* Apology for Tradition, p. 49.

reſiſting, which conſiſts in this Principle, Nothing is to be admitted but what deſcends by Tradition, &c. *ſays no more towards proving an Error's over-running the Church, than the Orator for* George's *leaping over the Steeple.* How vain is this? When it appears, from this Inſtance that I have given of the ſtate of the *Roman* Church, in the *Ninth* and *Tenth* Centuries, and afterwards; that the cauſes of Error were infinitely ſtronger than the power of reſiſtance. The great cauſes of Error are *Ignorance* and *Vice*; where *Ignorance* reigns, there's no *Power*; where *Vice*, no *Will* to reſiſt it. And how great the Ignorance and Vitiouſneſs of all Orders of Men in the *Roman* Church was, is too too apparent from the Teſtimonies I have brought. Where was the ſtrength of reſiſting Error, when for 150 Years together the Popes were the vileſt of Men, Biſhops and Prieſts overwhelmed with Ignorance, abandoned to all manner of Vice, and moſt ſupinely negligent in inſtructing the People? In ſuch a degenerate ſtate of a Church, what ſtrength is there in this Principle, *Nothing is to be admitted but what deſcends by Tradition?* When thoſe, who ought to teach Men what that Doctrine is which was derived to them by Tradition, are generally careleſs of their Duty, and ignorant themſelves what that Doctrine is; When they addict themſelves wholly to the ſatisfying of their Ambition, and other Luſts, and

carry on designs of Gain, and getting Dominion over the People. What can hinder men so disposed from corrupting the Doctrine of Christ, and suiting it to their own Lusts and Interests? And what shall hinder the People from embracing those Corruptions? when by the negligence of their Pastors to instruct them, and not only so, but also by their being deprived of the Scriptures in a known Tongue, they are become utterly incapable of knowing what the true Doctrine of Christ is. So that in an Age of such profound Ignorance and Vice, and general neglect of Instruction 'tis so far from being impossible for Errors to over-run a Church, that the contrary is morally impossible; and *George's long staff* and advantageous *cast of his Body* are more powerfull causes to enable him to leap over *Paul's* Steeple, than this Principle, *That nothing is to be admitted, but what descends by Tradition*, is to keep Errors out of a Church in an Ignorant and Vitious Age; when few or none are either able or willing to instruct Men in the Truth. For suppose this always to have been the Principle of Christians, *viz. That nothing is to be admitted as the Doctrine of Christ, but what is descended to them by Tradition:* How shall this Principle secure the Church from Heresie, any more than this, *viz. That nothing but Truth is to be assented to*, doth secure men from Error? Or more than this, *viz. That*

no

no man is to do any thing but what is wiſe and vertuous, does ſecure the generality of mankind from Folly and Vice?

SECT. VIII.

§. 1. *Secondly*, The *Principles* upon which this Demonſtration relies are not ſufficiently proved by him. The ſecond Anſwer to his ſecond Demonſtration.

His *firſt* Principle is this, *That Age, which holds her Faith delivered thus from the Apoſtles, neither can it ſelf have changed any thing in it, nor know or doubt that any Age ſince the Apoſtles had changed or innovated any thing therein. This Propoſition* (he tells us) *needs no proof to evidence it, but only an Explication. For ſince no man can hold contrary to his knowledge, or doubt of what he holds, nor change or innovate in the caſe propoſed without knowing he did ſo; 'tis a manifeſt impoſſibility a whole Age ſhould fall into an abſurdity ſo inconſiſtent with the nature of one ſingle man.* But (by his favour) that which he ſays is no *proof*, but only an *Explication*, is a *proof* if it be any thing; and the force of it this; That which is *inconſiſtent with the nature of one ſingle man, is manifeſtly impoſſible to a whole Age*; but it is inconſiſtent with the nature of any ſingle man *to hold contrary to his knowledge, &c.* therefore impoſſible to a whole Age; and conſequently, *that Age which holds her Faith delivered thus from the*

Apoſtles, neither can it ſelf have changed any thing, nor, &c. So that in order to the making good of this *firſt Principle*, Mr. *S.* hath left nothing unproved but only this Propoſition, *namely*, That it is impoſſible that any one ſingle man that holds his Faith to have been delivered uninterruptedly from the Apoſtles, ſhould ever himſelf have changed any thing in it, or know or doubt that any Age ſince the Apoſtles hath changed or innovated any thing therein: And to make out the truth of this Propoſition, there only remains this to be proved, *viz.* That it is impoſſible for any ſingle man to be miſtaken. For if that be poſſible, then contrary to Mr. *S.* a man may hold that to have been delivered as a Doctrine of Faith from the Apoſtles which was not ſo delivered.

§ 2. His *ſecond Principle* is this, *That no Age could innovate any thing, and withall deliver that very thing to poſterity as received from Chriſt by continual Succeſſion.* He proves it thus; *Since man is a rational Creature, he muſt have ſome Reaſon or Motive, good or bad, which he propoſeth to himſelf as an end to be atchieved by his action: And whatever his remote end is, his immediate end, in telling poſterity a late invented thing was held immediately before, is to make them believe it. Wherefore ſince a ſeen impoſſibility cannot be a Motive to one not frantick; and ſince 'tis evidently impoſſible they ſhould make poſterity believe*

lieve a thing ſo univerſally known to be falſe, as this muſt needs be, &c. *it is as impoſſible this Principle ſhould faulter, as that the foregoing Age ſhould conſpire to act without a motive, or that the ſucceeding Age ſhould believe what they know to be otherwiſe, that is, ſhould hold both ſides of a Contradiction in a clear matter of Fact.* The force of which is this, That it is impoſſible that any man not frantick ſhould attempt to innovate in matter of Chriſtian Doctrine, becauſe the immediate end of ſuch an attempt muſt be to have his new Doctrine believed; but it is impoſſible he ſhould attain this end, and impoſſible he ſhould not ſee that it is impoſſible to attain it: Now a ſeen impoſſibility is an end that cannot move any one that is not frantick; therefore no man that is not frantick, can attempt to innovate in matter of Chriſtian Doctrine. Thus he hath demonſtrated it impoſſible that there ſhould be any Hereticks, if a Heretick be one that attempts to innovate in matter of Chriſtian Doctrine. For if there be any ſuch attempters they muſt be frantick, and if they be frantick they can be no Hereticks; for Hereſie implies a Crime, but God will not impute the actions of mad men to them as faults. Again, ſuppoſe he that attempts to innovate be miſtaken (and I hope Mr. *S.* will grant that a Heretick is fallible) and think that which he delivers as Chriſt's Doctrine to be really ſo, though indeed it be

not; why ſhould ſuch a perſon think it impoſſible to make men believe that to be received from Chriſt which he really thinks was received, and thinks he can make it appear that it was ſo? And if this be granted, then it is not impoſſible that *Man, though he be a rational Creature,* may attempt to innovate. And if ſo, then his *ſecond Principle* is not proved. If Mr. *S.* had any regard to *the noble Science of Controverſie* (whereof he pretends to be ſo great a Maſter) he would not bring ſuch trifling Sophiſms inſtead of demonſtrative Proofs: And nothing leſs than a demonſtrative Proof will ſerve to eſtabliſh any Principle upon which a Demonſtration is to be built.

SECT. IX.

The third Anſwer to Mr. *S's* ſecond Demonſtration.

§ 1. DOctrines and Practices which muſt be acknowledged to have been innovated, have made the ſame pretence to uninterrupted Tradition. And of this I ſhall give ſeveral Inſtances; one among the *Jews*, the reſt among *Chriſtians*.

1. I ſhall inſtance among the *Traditionary Jews*, whoſe perſuaſion in our Saviour's time was, and ſtill is, that their Oral Doctrine, which they call their *Cabala*, hath deſcended to them from *Moſes* uninterruptedly. Now here is the *exiſtence of ſuch a perſuaſion*, as Mr. *S.* affirms to be *impoſſible* with-

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out Traditions ever-indeficiency to beget it. And this perſuaſion of theirs is moſt exactly parallel with the pretenſions of the *Romiſh* Church according to Mr. *S.* For here's a multitude of Traditionary *Jews*, manifoldly greater in proportion to the Diſſenters in that Church, than the *Romiſh* Church is in compariſon to thoſe Chriſtians that diſſent from Her. *Joſephus* tells us *, That *the richer ſort were of the perſuaſion of the Sadduces, but the multitude were on the Phariſees ſide.* So that the *Phariſees* had this mark of the true Church (as *Bellarmine* calls it) common to them with the Church of *Rome*, that they were the greateſt number, and ſo they continue to this very day; inſomuch that although they do not call themſelves the *Catholicks*, yet I am ſure they call all *Jews* that do diſſent from them *Schiſmaticks.* Now that the *Sadduces* were for the written Law againſt Oral Tradition, is I confeſs no credit to us; but that our *Saviour* reproved the Traditionary Doctrines and Practices of the *Phariſees*, becauſe by them they made void the written Law, is much more to the diſcredit of the Aſſerters of Oral Tradition. Both *Romaniſts* and *Phariſees* they own alike a *written Doctrine*, but then they both pretend the true ſenſe and explication thereof to have deſcended to them by *Oral Tradition.* For juſt as the Traditionary *Chriſtians* do now, ſo

* Antiq. Jud. l. 13. c. 18.

Joſephus tells * us the Traditionary *Jews* of old, the *Phariſees*, did pretend by their Oral Tradition *to interpret the Law more accurately and exactly* than any other Sect. In like manner *he* * tells us, That *all things, that belonged to Prayer and Divine Worſhip, were regulated and adminiſtred according to their interpretations* of the Law. And they both agree in this, to make void the *Word of God by their Tradition*; which the *Phariſees* did no otherwiſe than Mr. *S.* does, by equalling *Oral Tradition to Scripture*; nay preferring it above *Scripture*, in making it the ſole Rule of Faith, and interpreting the Scripture according to it. Hence are thoſe common ſayings in the *Talmud*, and other Jewiſh Books; *Do not think that the written Law is the foundation, but that the Law Orally delivered is the right foundation*; which is to ſay with Mr. *S.* that not the Scripture, but *Oral Tradition* is the true *Rule of Faith*. Again, *There is more in the words of the Scribes* (*viz.* the Teſtifiers of Tradition) *than in the words of the written Law*. Again, *The Oral Law excells the Written, as much as the Soul doth the Body*; which accords very well with what Mr. *S.* frequently tells us, That the Scripture without Tradition is but a dead Letter, deſtitute of life and ſenſe. Hence alſo it is that they required the People (as the Traditionary Church does now) to yield up themſelves to the dictates of

* Ibid. l. 17. c. 3. & de Bell. Jud. l. 1. c. 4. & l. 2. c. 12.

* Antiq l. 18. c. 2.

of Tradition even in the moſt abſurd things, as appears by that common ſaying among them, *If the Scribes ſay that the right hand is the left, and the left the right* (that Bread is Fleſh, and Wine is Bloud) *hearken to them*, that is, make no ſcruple of whatſoever they deliver as Tradition, though never ſo contrary to Reaſon or Senſe. And laſtly, The Doctrines of the *Phariſees* were many of them *practical*; ſuch were all thoſe which concerned external rites and obſervances, as *waſhing of hands and cups*, &c. So that theſe *Phariſaical* Traditions had alſo that *unſpeakable* advantage which Mr. *S.* ſays renders their Traditions *unmiſtakeable*, That they were daily practiſed, and came down *clad in ſuch plain matters of Fact, that the moſt ſtupid man living could not poſſibly be ignorant of them.* Therefore, according to Mr. *S*'s Principles, it was impoſſible that any Age of the *Jews* ſhould be perſuaded that theſe things were commanded by *Moſes* and ever ſince obſerved, if they had not been ſo: And yet our *Saviour* denies theſe Cuſtoms to have been of any ſuch Authority as they pretended.

§ 2. But I needed not to have taken all this pains to ſhew the agreement which is between the Traditionary *Jews* and *Papiſts*, their own Writers ſo liberally acknowledging it. Mr. *White** indeed ſays, That *the Faith of the Jews was not delivered to them Orally, but by Writing*; than which nothing can be more

* De Fid & Theol. Tract. 1. Sect. 6.

more inconsistent with his *Hypothesis*. For if the *Jewish Faith* was conveyed to them not *Orally*, but by *Writing*, then either the *Jewish* Church had no sufficient *Rule of Faith*, or else a Writing may be such a Rule. But other of their *Champions* make great use of the Parallel, between the Traditionary *Jews* and the *Romish* Church, to confirm from thence their own Traditionary Doctrines. Cardinal *Perron* hath a full passage to this purpose; *As this* (says he *) *is to preserve a sound and entire respect to the Majesty of the ancient Mosaick Scripture, to believe and observe not onely all the things which are therein actually contained, but also those things which are therein contained mediately and relatively, as the Doctrines of Paradise,* &c. *which were not contained therein but mediately, and by the authority which it gave to the deposition of the Patriarchal and Mosaick Tradition, preserved by heart, and in the Oral Doctrine of the Synagogue: So this is to preserve a sound and entire respect to the Majesty of the Apostolical Scripture, to believe and observe all the things which it contains, not onely immediately and by it self, but mediately and by reference to the Apostolical Traditions, to which in gross and generally it gives the Authority of Apostolical Doctrines, and to the Church the Authority of Guardian and Depositary to preserve and attest them. Voysin* in this *Observations* upon

* Rep. to K. *James*, observ. 3. c. 4.

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Raymundus Martyn, * tells us, *That as in the Old Law the great Conſiſtory at* Jeruſalem *was the foundation of the true Tradition, ſo* (ſays he) *the See of* Rome *is the foundation of our Traditions. And as the continual ſucceſſion of the High Prieſts and Fathers among the Jews was the great confirmation of the Truth of their Traditions, ſo* (ſays he) *with us the Truth of our Catholick Doctrine is confirmed by a continual ſucceſſion of Popes.*

* Pugio Fid. p. 145.

§ 3. From all this it appears, that the *Phariſees* among the *Jews* made the ſame pretence to *Oral Tradition* which the *Papiſts* do at this day according to Mr. *S.* And if ſo, then Mr. *S*'s Demonſtration *à Poſteriori* is every whit as ſtrong for the *Jews* againſt our *Saviour*, as it is for the *Papiſts* againſt the *Proteſtants*. For we find that in our *Saviour*'s time, it was then *the preſent perſuaſion of the Traditionary* Jews, *that their Faith*, and their Rites, and the true ſenſe and interpretation of their written Law was *deſcended from* Moſes *and the* Prophets *to them uninterruptedly*; *which we find was moſt firmly rooted in their hearts.* But the *Jews* had conſtant Tradition among them, that the Meſſiah was to be a great temporal Prince: And though the Letters of the Prophecies concerning him, might well enough have been accommodated to the low and ſuffering condition of our Saviour; yet they did *infallibly* know that their

their Meſſiah was to be another kind of perſon, from *ſenſe written in their hearts*, from the interpretation of thoſe Prophecies Orally brought down to them *from the Patriarchal and Moſaick Tradition preſerved by heart and in the Oral Doctrine of the Synagogue, and from the living voice of* their *Church eſſential*, that is, the univerſal conſent of the then Traditionary *Jews*. If it be ſaid, That the Jewiſh Tradition did indeed bring down ſeveral Doctrines not contained in Scripture, of *Paradiſe*, of *Hell*, of the *laſt Judgement*, of *the Reſurrection*, &c. (as Cardinal *Perron* affirms) but it did not bring down this *Point of the Meſſiah's being a Temporal Prince:* Then as Mr. *S.* * asks us, ſo the *Jew* does him; *By what virtue Tradition brought down theſe other Points? and whether the ſame virtue were not powerfull to bring down* this *as well as thoſe?* Then he will ask him farther, *Is there not a neceſſary connexion and relation between a conſtant Cauſe, and its formal Effect? So that if its formal Effect be Points received as delivered ever, the proper Cauſe muſt be an ever-delivery; whence he will argue from ſuch an Effect to its Cauſe for any particular Point, and conſequently for* this *Point that is in Controverſie between* Jews and Chriſtians, concerning the Meſſiah's being a Temporal Prince, *in caſe it be a Point held ever delivered*; but moſt certain it is, it was ſo held

* P. 76.

held by the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, and hath been held ſo ever ſince to this day.

I ſhall not trouble the *Reader* with tranſcribing the reſt of this Demonſtration, onely deſire him as he reads it over, to imagine inſtead of Mr, *S.* a *Phariſee*, demonſtrating againſt one of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples the Infallibility of the *Oral Tradition* of the *Jews*: And I doubt not but he will find this *Demonſtration*, and every part of it (changing onely the Names) as forcibly concluding *Chriſt* not to be the *Meſſiah*, as it doth infer any point of *Popery* againſt the *Proteſtants*.

§ 4. Before I leave this *Inſtance* of the *Jewiſh Tradition*, I ſhall briefly conſider what Mr. *White* * hath offered by way of anſwer to it; as, *Firſt*, That the *matter* of theſe Traditions is nothing elſe but *Explications of Scripture framed and invented by their own Rabbines*. So *we* ſay, that the Popiſh Traditions are Innovations. But then Mr. *White*, and Mr. *S.* tell us, That they can demonſtrate them to be deſcended from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, becauſe it is the preſent perſuaſion of a multitude of Chriſtians that they are ſo deſcended. In like manner, if this Demonſtration be good, the *Jews* can prove their Traditions to be deſcended from *Moſes* and the *Prophets*. *Secondly*, He ſays, that the *form of theſe Traditions*

* Apol. 123. &c.

Traditions is more ridiculous than the Canting of Gypſies, or the jugling of Hocus-pocus, becauſe it conſiſts in inventing the ſenſe of Scripture from the myſteries, and numbers, and changes of Letters. This is a groſs inexcuſable miſtake. For though the *Jews* have ſuch a *Cabala* (called *Gematry*) as this which Mr. *White* deſcribes; yet that *Cabala* which is urged in this *Inſtance*, and which our Saviour reproves in the *Phariſees* by the name of Tradition, is quite another thing, and among the Jewiſh Writers known by the name of the *Unwritten or Oral Law*; which they ſay was delivered to *Moſes* on Mount *Sinai*, and by him conveyed to *Aaron* and *Joſhua*, and the *Elders*, and ſucceſſively delivered down from one Age to another; and at laſt by *Rabbi Jehuda* compiled into one Volume, which they call *Miſhna*, or δευτέρωσις. And this does not conſiſt in the Art of Numbring, Combining, or changing of Letters, as Mr. *White* imagines. But ſuppoſe it did ſo, and were more ridiculous than he conceits it to be; the *Inſtance* would be ſo much the more concluſive againſt them, if what they affirm be true, That *Oral Tradition* is infallible, and that the perſuaſion of a Traditionary Church in any Age, that ſuch a Doctrine deſcended to them from *Chriſt* or *Moſes*, be a demonſtration that it did ſo: For if this be ſufficient evidence, 'tis nothing to the purpoſe

purpoſe what the Doctrine be either for *matter* or *form*: For if it be once demonſtrated to have come from *Chriſt* or *Moſes*, it is without any farther diſpute to be received as of Divine authority. So that Mr. *White* quite alters the ſtate of the queſtion; which was not whether the Jewiſh *Cabala* be abſurd and ridiculous, but whether the general perſuaſion of the *Jews* in any Age, that it deſcended to them by uninterrupted Tradition from *Moſes*, be a demonſtration that it did ſo. If it be, then the Jewiſh *Cabala* is as demonſtratively of Divine Authority as the Oral Doctrine of the Papiſts, *Thirdly*, He ſays, *This Cabala was a Doctrine delivered to few, and that with ſtrict charge to keep it from Publicity, and ſo communicate it again ſucceſſively to a ſelect Committee of a few*; *wherein* (ſays he) *you may ſee as fair an opportunity for jugling and couzenage, as in our caſe there is an impoſſibility* This I think is true of the *Cabala* which (it ſeems) Mr. *White* had onely in his view, but is a horrible miſtake if he ſpeak of the Oral Law which was contained in the *Miſhna*, and which this *Inſtance* onely intends. For of this *Maimonides* * ſays expreſly, *That in every Age, from the time of* Moſes *to* Rabbi Jehudah, *who compiled the* Miſhna, *the Oral Law was publickly taught: And that after* Rabbi Jehudah *had compiled it into one Volume, the Iſraelites did generally write out*

* In Præfat. Sum. Talmud

out Copies of it, and it was every where carefully taught, for fear leſt the Oral Law ſhould by forgetfulneſs be loſt among the Jews. So that upon account of the publickneſs of the Doctrine, there is as *great an impoſſibility of Jugling and Couzenage in the caſe* of the *Jewiſh* as of the *Romiſh* Tradition. Beſides, was *waſhing of Hands and Cups*, which they alſo pretended to have come down to them from *Moſes*, and to have been conſtantly practiſed in every Age, a ſecret thing? Was it not a *practical* Tradition, and performed in a ſenſible matter? If therefore no Age can conſpire to impoſe upon the next in a plain cuſtome; and if an univerſal Tradition of ſuch a thing cannot come in without ſuch a conſpiracy: How could this be the perſuaſion of any Age, that *waſhing of Hands*, &c. was preſcribed by *Moſes* and practiſed in all Ages, if it had not truely been ſo?

§ 5. *Secondly*, As for *Inſtances* among *Chriſtians*, whereof many remain yet upon Record; as namely, the various and oppoſite Traditions about the *time of Eaſter*, and concerning the *Baptiſm of Hereticks*: and the Apoſtolical Tradition (as St. *Auſtin* calls it) concerning *the admiſſion of Infants to the Communion*; all which have been frequently urged in this Controverſie, and none of them yet ſufficiently anſwered; I ſhall to avoid tediouſneſs, paſſing by theſe, inſiſt onely upon that

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of the *Chialiſts*; which in *Juſtin Martyr*'s time was the perſwaſion of all Orthodox Chriſtians, that is (in Mr. *S*'s Dialect) of all the *holders to Tradition*. For if notwithſtanding the perſwaſion of that Age, that this Doctrine was deſcended to them from the Apoſtles, it was not really ſo deſcended; then the perſwaſion of Chriſtians in any Age, that a Doctrine was brought down to them from the Apoſtles, is no Demonſtration that it was ſo.

§ 6. To this *Inſtance* Mr. *White* anſwers* by telling us, that *Euſebius* ſays that this Tradition ſprang from *Papias* (*a good but a credulous and ſimple man*) who it ſeems was miſtaken in ſaying that it was the Apoſtles Doctrine. But for all this, *Juſtin Martyr* ſays it was received by all *Orthodox Chriſtians* in his Time, as a Doctrine deſcended to them from the Apoſtles. And if *Juſtin* ſaid true, nothing can make more againſt their Demonſtration of the Infallibility of Tradition, than the natural conſequence from theſe two ſayings of *Euſebius* and *Juſtin*, which is this, That the miſtake of one ſimple and credulous man may in an Age or two give occaſion to the univerſal entertainment of a Doctrine, as deſcended down to them from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, when there was no ſuch matter. Hath not Mr. *White* now done his *Rule of Faith* great ſervice by this Anſwer? But it is according to his manner in all his Writings, to ſay any thing to remove a

* Apol. p. 78, 79, &c.

preſent Objection, though never ſo much to the prejudice of his main *Hypotheſis*; than which I do not know any quality in a *Writer* which doth more certainly betray the want either of judgment, or of ſincerity, or of a good Cauſe.

*Apol. p. 81. § 7. And whereas he ſays *, *That* Irenæus *his teſtimony proves it to be no Tradition; for he ſets down the ſuppoſed words of our Saviour, which plainly ſhews it is a ſtory, not a Tradition; a Tradition being a ſenſe delivered not in ſet words, but ſetled in the Auditors hearts by hundreds of different expreſſions explicating the ſame meaning.* When I conſider this paſſage of Mr. *White*, I confeſs I cannot complement him, and ſay (as he makes his *Nephew* do in the *Dialogue* * between them) *I cannot but applaud your Diſcourſe, it hath ſo pleaſing and attractive a countenance.* And again *, *I am not able to oppoſe what you ſay by any weighty Objection, your Arguments being not only ſtrong and nervous, but of ſo comely and winning a complexion*, &c. I cannot (I ſay) ſpeak all this of his preſent Argument. But I may deſervedly apply to it the laſt part of his *Nephew*'s Complement, That it is an Argument ſo framed, *as if without any evidence of its conſequence it would perſwade men to believe it.* But to return an Anſwer to this paſſage: It ſeems (according to Mr. *White*) that *Irenæus* was miſtaken in the very nature of Tradition: and if ſo learned a *Father* was ignorant in the common *Rule of Faith*,

* *Ruſhworth* Dial. 4. Sect. 4.

*Ibid. Sect. 5.

Faith, what can we (to uſe Mr. *S*'s words *) *undertakingly promiſe to weaker heads* ? Mr. *S.* inſtanceth in the *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*, as the principal Traditions which Parents teach their Children ; but now Mr. *White* can ſhew plainly that theſe are no *Traditions* but *Stories*, becauſe *Tradition is a ſenſe delivered not in ſet words*, &c. As if Chriſt and his Apoſtles could deliver no Doctrine unleſs they expreſſed the ſame thing an hundred ſeveral ways. But ſuppoſe they did ſo (which no man hath any reaſon to imagine, becauſe a thing may be expreſſed as plainly by one way as by an hundred) can no man deliver this Tradition who ſpeaks it in any one of thoſe expreſſions ? If one ſhould employ his Servant to carry a Meſſage, and (becauſe Mr. *White* thinks this neceſſary) ſhould ſettle the meaning of it in his heart, by telling him the ſame thing in an hundred ſeveral expreſſions ; and the Servant ſhould go and deliver this Meſſage in one of thoſe very expreſſions that his Maſter uſed to him, and ſhould ſay theſe were his Maſters very words ; would not this be well enough ?

* P. 39.

No, if he had come to ſuch a Philoſopher as Mr. *White*, he would ſoon have given him to underſtand that he was not fit to bring a Meſſage, or to be credited in it, who had ſo little wit as not to know that a Meſſage is a thing not to be delivered *in ſet-words*. And now I would entreat Mr. *White* to reconcile

himſelf in this matter to his Friends. Mr. *Ruſhworth* ſays *, *'Tis impoſſible to put fully and beyond all quarrel the ſame ſenſe in divers words:* Which if it be true, I would fain know what certain courſe Mr. *White* can preſcribe *to explicate the ſame meaning by hundreds of different expreſſions*, and conſequently how Tradition can be infallibly conveyed *by ſetling the ſenſe of it in the Auditors hearts* by ſuch variety of expreſſions. Mr. *Creſſy** likewiſe (a zealous Aſſertor of Tradition) does affirm, *That the Primitive Churches were even to exceſs ſcrupulous in maintaining the very phraſes of Traditionary Doctrines*; which (according to Mr. *White*) *plainly ſhews* theſe Doctrines *to be ſtories, not Traditions, becauſe Tradition is a ſenſe delivered not in ſet-words.* The ſame *Author* complains, * *That few among their learneſt Maſters of Controverſie, propoſe the Points to be diſputed between them and the Proteſtants, in the Language of the Church.* By which I ſuppoſe he does not mean, that theſe Controvertiſts were to blame in that they did not *ſettle the ſenſe of theſe Points by hundreds of different expreſſions explicating* the ſame meaning, but that they did not keep to the words wherein the Church had in Councils or otherwiſe (if there be any other way) declared her ſenſe of thoſe Points. Again *he* * ſays, That *St.* Paul, *referring to the Doctrine ſettled by Oral Inſtruction, to ſhew the uniformity of it every where, calls it a form*

* Dial. 2. Sect. 6.

* Exomolog. c. 10. Sect. 4.

* Ibid. c. 19. Sect. 2.

* Ibid. c. 27. Sect. 2.

form of wholsome words. From whence we may conclude either that St. *Paul* did not well to call the Traditionary Doctrine (as Mr. *Cressy* says he does) *a form of words*, or else (which is more probable) that Mr. *White* is mistaken in saying, That *a Tradition is a sense not delivered in set-words.* Farthermore, the same Mr. *Cressy* * tells us, That St. *Augustine* was carefull *not only to deliver Traditional Truths themselves, but the terms also in which those Truths were conveyed to his Times.* But now Mr. *White* could have informed St. *Augustin*, that this officious care of his was not only superfluous, but pernicious to Tradition.

* Ibid. c. 28. Sect. 1.

§ 8. But to return to *Justin*'s Testimony; to which the sum of Mr. *Whites* answer is, That *Justin esteem'd it not as a point necessary to salvation; but rather a piece of Learning higher than the common: Since he both acknowledges other Catholicks held the contrary, and entitles those of his perswasion* κατὰ πάντα ὀρθογνώμονες *right in all opinions*, that is, *wholly of his own mind.* It is not material to my purpose, whether or no *Justin* look'd upon this *as a point necessary to Salvation*, so long as it is evident that he looked upon it as a Divine Revelation and part of the Christian Doctrine. And yet it seems he thought it a point of more than ordinary importance, because he joins it with the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, and says that it was not disown-

ed by any but those who also denied the Resurrection. But whereas Mr. *White* says that *Justin acknowledges other Catholicks to have held the contrary*, I hope to make it evident from the scope and *series* of his Discourse, that he acknowledges no such thing; but that the plain design of his Discourse, is to shew that this Doctrine was owned by all true Christians. For when *Trypho* asks him*, Whether the Christians did indeed believe that *Jerusalem should be re-built*, &c. He returns him this answer, *I am not such a Wretch as to speak otherwise than I think. I have told thee before that my self and many others (as ye all know) are of the mind that this will come to pass. But, not many indeed of those Christians who, are* [not] *of the pure and pious perswasion, do not own this, I have intimated to thee.* That the negative particle (though omitted in the Copy) ought to be thus inserted, will be clear to any one that considers what follows. For after he had spoken of those who disown this Doctrine, he immediately adds by way of farther description of them, that though they are called Christians yet in Truth they are not Christians, in these words; *For of these (viz.* the Disowners of this Doctrine) *who are called indeed Christians, but are Atheistical and Impious Hereticks, I have shewed thee that they teach in all Points Blasphemous, Atheistical and Absurd things. But that ye may know*

* Dial. cum *Tryph.* p. 306. Edit. Lutet. 1615.

know that I do not ſay this for you only; I will, according to my ability, compile all theſe Diſcourſes which have paſt between us into one piece; in which I will by Writing make Profeſſion of this very thing which I now declare to you. For I do not chooſe to follow men or the Doctrines of men, but God and ſuch Doctrines as are from him. And though ye may have converſed with ſome who are called Chriſtians, and yet do not acknowledge this; but even dare to blaſpheme the God of Abraham, *and the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob; *who alſo ſay that there is no Reſurrection of the dead, but that ſo ſoon as they dye their Souls are received into Heaven: Do not count theſe men Chriſtians; no more than a man, that conſiders things rightly, would own the Sadduces and ſuch like Sects to be Jews*, &c. *But I my ſelf, and as many Chriſtians as are thoroughly of the right perſwaſion, do both know that there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Fleſh, and a thouſand years in* Jeruſalem *which ſhall be built, adorned and enlarged*, &c. Can any thing be plainer than that *Juſtin* endeavours by this Diſcourſe to ſatisfie *Trypho*, that this *Point* they were ſpeaking of was a *Divine Doctrine*, and owned to be ſo by all Chriſtians; except ſuch as did only bear the Name and Title of Chriſtians, but were indeed blaſphemous Hereticks and deniers of the Reſurrection? By which Character that he intends to deſcribe the impious Sects of the

Gnosticks, will appear by and by. So that Mr. *White* must either allow the inserting of the *negative Particle* (which Mr. *Mede** proves to have been omitted in the Copy) or else acknowledge that those who are *Christians only in Name, but in Truth are impious blasphemous and absurd Hereticks*, may properly be said to be of the pure and pious Opinion of the Christians. And if only these be the *other Catholicks*, whom Mr. *White* says *Justin acknowledges* to have *held contrary* to the *Millenaries*, I am contented he should make his best of them. If Mr. *White* should blame the inserting of the *negative Particle* [*not*] into *Justin*'s Text, as too great a boldness with the *Fathers*; it were easily answered, that the sense evidently requires it. And in such a case it is no boldness, but such a liberty as the most Learned of their own Interpreters and Commentators upon the Fathers do frequently take. And for Mr. *S.* if he takes offence at this, one may with reason (since the exigency of the sense plainly requires the inserting of it) demand of him (what he * unreasonably does of us in relation to all the *affirmative Propositions of Scripture*) *to demonstrate that the Particle* [not] *was not left out* of this Clause of *Justin*, by those who Transcribed the Book. But besides the exigency of the sense in this place; that the *negative* ought to have been inserted, will appear by the reference which *Justin* makes

* Nov. Edit. p. 664.

* p. 31.

makes in this *paſſage* to ſomething foregoing in the ſame *Dialogue*. *I have* (ſays he) *declared to thee before, that my ſelf and many others are of the mind that this will come to paſs. But, that many indeed of thoſe Chriſtians, who are* [not] *of the pure and pious perſwaſion, do not own this, I have intimated to thee. For of theſe, who are called indeed Chriſtians but are Atheiſtical and Impious Hereticks, I have ſhewed thee that they teach in all Points Blaſphemous, Atheiſtical, and Abſurd things.* In theſe words he plainly refers to ſome precedent paſſage, which if it can be found will be a certain Key to open to us the ſenſe of this place. I know that Mr. *Mede* * (perhaps not obſerving it) thought that paſſage to have been fraudulently expunged by the Enemies of the *Millenary Opinion*: But it ſeems to me to be ſtill extant. For I find towards the beginning of this *Dialogue*, after that *Juſtin* had endeavoured to prove at large out of Scripture this glorious coming of Chriſt, and to refute thoſe who applied the *Texts* produced by him to that purpoſe to *Hezekiah*, and to *Solomon* whoſe falling off to Idolatry he occaſionally mentions; whereupon *Trypho* objects to him that many who were called *Chriſtians*, did alſo communicate in the Idol-feaſts. To this, *I ſay*, I find *Juſtin* returning to this anſwer *: *Firſt*, He denies not that there are ſuch as theſe *who own themſelves Chriſtians, and confeſs the Crucified Jeſus*

* Ibid.

* P. 253.

ſus to be both Lord and Chriſt, and yet teach not his Doctrines, but the Doctrines of ſeducing ſpirits. But, ſays he, *We who are the Diſciples of the true and pure Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt are from this very thing the more ſtrengthned in our Faith, and become more confirmed in the Hope which by him hath been declared to us. For we now ſee thoſe things viſibly and effectually accompliſh't which he before hand told us would be done in his Name. For he ſaid, Many ſhall come in my Name,* &c. By which *Hope* any one that reads the Antecedents and Conſequents will plainly ſee that *Juſtin* means the *Hope* of the *Millennium* (which he had been ſpeaking of before) and conſequently of the *Reſurrection*, which he looked upon as having a ſtrict Connexion with the Doctrine of the *Millennium*; becauſe (as he tells us afterwards) *this Doctrine* was denied by none but ſuch as alſo denied the *Reſurrection*. And of theſe men his deſcription runs on in theſe words, πολλοὶ, &c. *Many* (ſaith he) *both are and have been, that have come in the Name of Jeſus, and taught both to ſpeak and do Atheiſtical and Blaſphemous things; and are by us denominated from thoſe men from whom each of their Doctrines and Opinions had its riſe* (namely as it follows *Marcionites, Valentinians,* &c.) *and all theſe in their ſeveral ways teach men to Blaſpheme the Creator of the Univerſe, and the Chriſt whoſe Coming was foretold by him, and*

and the God of Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob. *But we have no Communion with them, as knowing them to be Atheiſtical and Impious*, &c. This paſſage in hand, when I compare it with the Text before quoted and conſider the words and characters of them both, I cannot but believe it the very ſame that he refers to in thoſe words, *I have declared to thee, I have intimated to thee*, &c. If ſo, the matter in Controverſie is clear, that the Doctrine of the *Millennium* was univerſal. If it be not the ſame, I could wiſh to be ſhew'd ſome other place in this *Dialogue*, where *Juſtin* makes any ſuch *Declaration* or *Intimation*. In the mean while by compariſon of theſe places, it is evident there are but two ſorts of men that *Juſtin* ſpeaks of. *Firſt*, Who believe the *Millennium*; *We the Diſciples* * *of the true and pure Doctrine*, &c. *viz. My ſelf and many others*; again, *my ſelf and as many Chriſtians as are thoroughly* * *of the right Perſwaſion*. *Secondly*, Who deny the *Millennium*; *Many Chriſtians*, ſaith *Juſtin*; but what Chriſtians? *Of a right perſwaſion*? *That*, ſaith he, *I have ſignified before*. τὰς γὰρ &c. *For I have ſhewed thee of them who are called Chriſtians, but are indeed Atheiſts and Impious Hereticks, that they teach Blaſphemous and Atheiſtical and Abſurd things*: And true it is, he did *ſhew* before that thoſe who deny'd the *Millennium* were *many in number, and were called Chriſtians*, &c. *but were Teachers*

* τ ἀληθινῆς καὶ καθαρᾶς διδασκαλίας.
* ὀρθογνώμονες.

ers of Blaſphemous and Atheiſtical things &c. *and known to be Atheiſts and Impious*, &c. But he *ſhewed* it of none other beſides theſe. So that if this Doctrine were likewiſe denied by *many Chriſtians of the pure and pious perſwaſion*, then *Juſtin Martyr* had foulely forgot himſelf. But if not, then it is plain that the Tranſcribers have wronged *Juſtin* by leaving out a *Negative* which ought to have been inſerted. It is worth obſerving by the way how Mr. *White* pleaſes himſelf with falſe and frivolous Criticiſms upon the words, πολλοὺς & ὀρθογνώμονες. Falſe they are, as Mr. *White* ſhall know if he deſires to hear any more of them; and frivolous they are rendered by my preceding Diſcourſe; for which reaſon I ſay no more of them. But I think he may do well hereafter (as Mr. *S.* * warily ſuggeſts) not to *engage* himſelf, nor be *hook't* by others, out of his own *infallible way*, but leave it wholly to the * *Bird-witted* Hereticks (as Mr. *S.* calls them) to *perch upon the ſpecifical natures* of Words, as he does *of Things*.

* P. 68.

* P. 69.

§ 9. Beſides theſe *Inſtances* I have given of Doctrines and Practices which Mr. *S.* cannot deny to have been innovated, I might inſtance likewiſe in the chief *Points* of Popery, and ſhew that for all their pretence to *Tradition*, they are really *Innovations*. But becauſe this would engage me in tedious Diſputes

putes about particular *Points*, I will only ſingle out one of their moſt fundamental *Doctrines*, viz. that of *Tranſubſtantiation*; concerning which I ſhall ſhew that, notwithſtanding it is the univerſal perſwaſion of the preſent *Roman* Church, yet they have not, nor can have any aſſurance that it was the Doctrine of Chriſt, and that it is deſcended to them by an uninterrupted Tradition. I ſhall not at all contend againſt the word *Tranſubſtantiation* (which is generally acknowledged to be new) but only the thing ſignified by it, a ſubſtantial change of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Chriſt. And this I might ſhew at large not to have been the Doctrine of the ancient *Fathers*. But becauſe Mr. *White*, and Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Creſſy* do ſo frequently and confidently tell us, that nothing is to be reputed a Traditionary Doctrine the contrary whereof hath been publickly held by any Catholick who continued afterwards uncenſured, and in the Communion of the Church: Therefore I ſhall content my ſelf at preſent with one clear *Teſtimony*, and that of a very eminent *Perſon* in the Church, St. *Theodoret*, concerning whom Pope *Leo* (in an Epiſtle to him, at the end of *Theodoret*'s Works) gives this Teſtimony, That *in the judgment of the Apoſtolick See he was free from all ſtain of Hereſie*. The paſſage I intend is in his *Dialogues*, between a *Catholick* under the name

of

of *Orthodoxus*, and *Eraniſtes* who ſuſteined the perſon of an *Heretick*. *Eraniſtes* * maintaining that the Body of Chriſt was changed into the ſubſtance of the Divinity, he illuſtrates it by this ſimilitude. *As* (ſays he) *the Symbols of the Lord's Body and Bloud are one thing before the invocation of the Prieſt; but after the invocation are changed and do become another thing: So the Body of our Lord, after his Aſcenſion, is changed into the Divine ſubſtance.* To which *Orthodoxus* returns this anſwer, *Thou art caught in thine own Net. Becauſe the myſtical Symbols after Conſecration do not paſs out of their own Nature; for they remain in their former ſubſtance, figure and appearance, and may be ſeen and handled even as before.* He does not onely in expreſs words deny the ſubſtance of the Symbols to be changed, but the occaſion upon which theſe words are brought in, and the ſcope of them (if they be of any force againſt the *Hereticks* illuſtration) renders them uncapable of any other ſenſe. When Mr. *S.* hath anſwered this *Teſtimony*, I have more for him.

* Dialog. 2.

That which I mainly urge againſt this *Doctrine* is, the monſtrous Abſurdities and Contradictions contained in it, together with the neceſſary conſequence of them. Several of the *Abſurdities* of it are well brought together by *Scotus* *, who tells us, That to prove the poſſibility of Chriſt's *Body* being contained under the *ſpecies* of *Bread* and *Wine*

* Diſtinct. 1. 4. diſt. 10. qu. 1. n. 3.

Wine many things muſt be proved which ſeem to involve a Contradiction; as, 1. *That one quantum* (or extended Body) *may be together in the very ſame place with another* 2. *That a leſs quantum may be together in the ſame place with a greater*; i.e. a Body of leſs extenſion may occupy not onely the ſame, but as much room as a Body of greater extenſion does; which is to ſay no more but this, that a Body leſs than another may be as great as that other even whil'ſt it is leſs than it. 3. *That a greater quantum may be together with every part of a leſs quantum*, i. e. a Body that is greater than another, may be as little as the leaſt part of that other body which is leſs than it. 4. *That a ſubject may be without quantity*, i. e. there may be a body which hath no kind of Magnitude. 5. That a Body may be ſomewhere where it was not before without changing its place, *i. e.* a Body may be removed to another place, whilſt it remains ſtill in the ſame place. 6. *That a quantum may be without any quantitative Mode*, i. e. a Body may be extended without any manner of extenſion. *The poſſibility of all which*, he ſaith (and I am very much of his mind) *it would be too tedious a work to prove*; and therefore he onely attempts to prove *the two laſt*, which (in all reaſon) is work enough for one man. All theſe *ſeeming* Contradictions (as he modeſtly calls them) are by his own acknowlegd-

ment

ment involved in this Doctrine. To theſe I might add many more; as, How a thing can be ſaid to be changed into another thing which did exiſt before? How a Body can be preſent in a place after the manner of a ſpirit? and yet this they affirm concerning the preſence of Chriſt's Body in the Sacrament; one might as well ſay that Snow is black, but not after the manner of blackneſs, but in the way of whiteneſs, which is to talk non-ſenſe after the manner of ſenſe: How the whole Body of Chriſt can be contained under the leaſt ſenſible part of the ſpecies of Bread, as is generally affirmed: nay, and *Scotus* * adds, that the whole Body is under every little part in its full proportions; for he ſays expreſly, That *the Head and Foot of the Body of Chriſt are as far diſtant from one another in the ſacrament, as they are in Heaven*; as if one ſhould ſay that a Body, all whoſe parts lye within the compaſs of a ſmall pins-head, may yet within that little compaſs have parts two yards diſtant from one another: And laſtly, how the ſenſible *ſpecies* of Bread, *e. g. quantity, whiteneſs, ſoftneſs*, &c. can exiſt without any *ſubject*? to affirm the poſſibility of which (as generally they do) is to ſay that there may be quantities *of white and ſoft nothings*; For this is the plain Engliſh of that aſſertion, *that ſenſible ſpecies may exiſt without a ſubject*; which being ſtrip'd of thoſe terms of Art (*ſpecies* and *ſubject*) that do a little diſguiſe

* Ibid. qu. 1. n. 12.

guiſe it, it appears to be plain *Non-ſenſe*.

Now the proper and neceſſary *conſequence* of this Doctrine is to take away all certainty, and eſpecially the certainty of ſenſe. For if that which my ſight and taſte and touch do all aſſure me to be a little piece of Wafer, may notwithſtanding this be Fleſh and Bloud, even the whole Body of a man; then notwithſtanding the greateſt aſſurance that Senſe can give me, that any thing is this or that, it may be quite another thing from what Senſe reported it to be. If ſo, then farewell the *Infallibility* of Tradition, which depends upon the certainty of Senſe: And which is a worſe conſequence, if this Doctrine be admitted we can have no ſufficient aſſurance that the Chriſtian Doctrine is a Divine Revelation. For the aſſurance of that depending upon the aſſurance we have of the Miracles ſaid to be wrought for the confirmation of it, and all the aſſurance we can have of a Miracle depending upon the certainty of our ſenſes, it is very plain that *that* Doctrine which takes away the certainty of Senſe, does in ſo doing overthrow the certainty of Chriſtian Religion. And what can be more vain than to pretend, that a man may be aſſured that ſuch a Doctrine is revealed by God, and conſequently true, which if it be true, a man can have no aſſurance at all of any Divine Revelation? Surely nothing is to be admitted by us as certain,

which being admitted we can be certain of nothing. It is a wonder that any man who conſiders the natural conſequences of this *Doctrine* can be a Papiſt; unleſs he have attained to Mr. *Creſſy*'s pitch of *Learning*, who ſpeaking of the difficult Arguments wherewith this Doctrine was preſſed, ſays * plainly, *I muſt anſwer freely and ingenuouſly, that I have not learned to anſwer ſuch Arguments, but to deſpiſe them.* And if this be a good way, when ever we have a mind to believe any thing to ſcorn thoſe Objections againſt it which we cannot ſolve; then Chriſtian Religion hath no advantage above the vileſt Enthuſiaſms; and a *Turk* may maintain *Mahomet* and his *Alcoran* (in oppoſition to *Chriſt* and his *Doctrine*) againſt all that *Grotius*, or any other hath ſaid, if he can but keep his countenance, and gravely ſay, *I have not learned to anſwer ſuch Arguments but to deſpiſe them.*

* Exomol. c. 73. Sect. 7.

§ 10. I will add one *Inſtance* more in another kind, to ſhew the uncertainty of *Oral* and *Practical* Traditions, and that ſhall be the Tradition concerning *Pope Joan*; than which ſcarce any was ever more generally received in the *Hiſtorical* kind. Many and great *Authours* affirm it, as *Teſtifiers* of the general Fame. None ever denied it till the *Reformers* had made uſe of it to the diſadvantage of Popery. Since that time not onely Papiſts deny it, but ſeveral of our own Writers ceaſe to believe it. *Phil. Bergomenſis*

ſis tells the ſtory thus: *Anno* 858. *John the 7th, Pope,* &c. *The Tradition is that this perſon was a Woman,* &c. Here's an *Oral Tradition.* He concludes thus; *In deteſtation of whoſe filthineſs, and to perpetuate the memory of her Name, the Popes even to this day going on Proceſſion with the People and the Clergy, when they come to the place of her Travel,* &c. *in token of abomination they turn from it, and go a by-way; and being paſt that deteſtable place, they return into the way, and finiſh their Proceſſion.* Here is one *Practical Tradition.* *And for avoiding of the like miſcarriages, it was decreed that no one ſhould thereafter be admitted into St.* Peter's *Chair* priuſquam per foratam ſedem futuri Pontificis genitalia ab ultimo Diacone Cardinale attractarentur: Here is another with a Witneſs * *Sabellicus* relates the ſame; and moreover ſays that this *Porphyry Chair was* in his time *to be ſeen in the Popes Palace.* He adds indeed that *Platina thinks that this Tradition of Pope* Jone *was not faithfully delivered to Poſterity. But however* (ſays he) *ſuch a Tradition there is.* Concerning the *firſt Practical Tradition, Platina* ſays that *he may not deny it.* For the *ſecond,* he thinks *the Chair rather deſign'd for a Stool* for another uſe, &c. He concludes, *Theſe things which I have related are commonly reported, yet from uncertain and obſcure Authours: Therefore I reſolved* (ſays he) *briefly and nakedly to ſet*

* Ennead. 9. L. 1.

them down, leſt I ſhould ſeem too obſtinately and pertinaciouſly to have omitted that which almoſt all affirm. It is no wonder that he ſays the *Authours* of this Report were *uncertain and obſcure*, ſince ſo very few writ any thing in that Age. But ſuppoſe none had writ of it, ſo long as he acknowledges it to have been a *general Oral Tradition* atteſted by a ſolemn and conſtant *Practice*, it has (according to Mr. *S*'s Principles) greater certainty than if it had been brought down to us by a hundred Books written in that very Age. So that here's an *Oral* and *Practical Tradition*, continued we are ſure for ſome hundreds of years, preſerved and propagated by a ſolemn *practice* of the *Popes*, *Clergy* and *People* of *Rome* in their *Proceſſions*, and by a *notorious Cuſtome* at the *Election* of every *Pope*; and in a matter of ſo great importance to their Religion (the honour of the See of *Rome*, and the uninterrupted Succeſſion from St. *Peter* being ſo nearly concerned in it) that, had it been falſe, they had been obliged under pain of Damnation, not onely not to have promoted it, but to have uſed all means to have diſcovered the falſity of it. Therefore Mr. *S.* is bound by his own Principles either to allow it for a Truth, or elſe to give an account when and how it began; which may poſſibly be made out by *We Metaphyſicians* (as he * ſtyles himſelf, and his *Scientifical Brethren*) but I aſſure

* P. 340.

assure him it is past the skill of * *Note-book Learning.* * P. 337.

SECT. X.

§ 1. IT is not the present persuasion of the *Church of Rome,* nor ever was, that their Faith hath descended to them by *Oral Tradition* as the sole *Rule* of it. And this being proved, the *Supposition* upon which his *Demonstration* is built falls to the ground. The fourth Answer to his second Demonstration.

And for the proof of this, I appeal to that * *Decree* of the *Council* of *Trent*, in which they declare, That because the *Christian Faith and Discipline are contained in written Books and unwritten Traditions*, &c. *therefore they do receive and honour the Books of Scripture and also Traditions* [pari pietatis affectu ac reverentiâ] *with equal pious affection and reverence*; which I understand not how those do, who set aside the Scripture, and make Tradition the sole Rule of their Faith. And consonantly to this *Decree*, the general Doctrine of the *Romish* Church is, that *Scripture and Tradition* make up the *Rule of Faith.* So the *Roman Catechism* (set forth by order of the Council of *Trent*) says * that *the sum of the Doctrine delivered to the Faithfull is contained in the Word of God, which is distributed into Scripture and Tradition. Bellarmine* * speaks to the same purpose, *That the Scripture is a* * Decret. primum quartæ Sess.

* In Præfat.

* De Verbo Dei, &c. l. 4. 12.

Rule of Faith, not an entire but partial one. The entire Rule is the Word of God, which is divided into two partial Rules, Scripture, and Tradition. According to this, the adequate Rule of Faith is the *Word of God*; which is contained partly in *Scripture*, and partly in the *Tradition* of the Church. And that *Scripture* is look'd upon by them as the *principal* Rule and *primary* foundation of their Faith, and *Tradition* as onely supplying the defects of Scripture, as to some *Doctrines* and *Rites* not contained in Scripture, must be evident to any one that hath been conversant in the chief of their controversial Divines. *Bellarmine* * where he gives the *marks* of a *Divine Tradition* speaks to this purpose, That that which they call a *Divine Tradition* is such a *Doctrine* or *Rite* as is not found in *Scripture*, but embraced by the whole Church; and for that reason believed to have descended from the Apostles. And he tells us farther *, That the Apostles committed all to *Writing*, which was commonly and publickly Preached; and that all things are in Scripture, which men are bound to know and believe explicitely: But then he says, that there were other things which the Apostles did not commonly and publickly teach; and these they did not commit to *Writing*, but delivered them onely by *word of mouth to the Prelates and Priests and perfect men of the Church.* And these

* De Verbo Dei non scripto. L. 4. c. 9.

* Ibid. c. 11.

theſe are the Apoſtolical Traditions he ſpeaks of. Cardinal *Perron* * ſays, *That the Scripture is the foundation of the Chriſtian Doctrine, either mediately or immediately.* And *that the Authority of unwritten Tradition is founded in general on theſe ſentences of the Apoſtle,* * *Hold the Traditions,* &c. Again, * *The things which thou haſt heard of me among many Witneſſes commit to faithfull men,* &c. And that *the Authority of the Church to preſerve, and eſpecially to declare theſe, is founded in this Propoſition,* viz. * *That the Church is the pillar and ground of Truth.* So that according to him, the *primary Rule of Faith* is *the Scripture,* in which the Authority of Tradition is founded. Mr. *Knott* * ſays expreſly, *We acknowledge the H. Scripture to be a moſt perfect Rule, for as much as a Writing can be a Rule; we onely deny that it excludes, either Divine Tradition, though it be unwritten, or an external Judge to keep, to propoſe, to interpret it,* &c. So that (according to him) *Scripture* is a perfect Rule, onely it does not exclude *unwritten Tradition,* &c. By which that he does not underſtand (as Mr. *S.* does) a concurrent *Oral Tradition* of all the ſame Doctrines which are contained in *Scripture,* but other Doctrines not therein contained, is plain from what he ſays elſewhere *, *We do not diſtinguiſh Tradition from the written Word, becauſe Tradition is not written by any, or in*

* Reply. Obſervat. 3. c. 4.

* 2 Theſſ. 2. 15.

* 2 Tim. 2. 2.

* 1 Tim. 3. 15.

* Charity maintained. c. 2. Sect. 1.

* Reply to Mr. Chill. c. 2. Sect. 179.

any Book or Writing; but becauſe it is not written in the Scripture or Bible; *Bellarmine* * alſo ſays the ſame. And as for the *interpreting of Scripture*, he tells us that this is not the office of a *Rule*, but of a *Judge*. * *There is* (ſays he) *a great and plain diſtinction between a Judge and a Rule. For as in a Kingdom the Judge hath his Rule to follow, which are the received Laws and Cuſtoms; which are not fit or able to declare, and be Judges to themſelves, but that Office muſt belong to a living Judge: So the Holy Scripture is and may be a Rule, but cannot be a Judge.* Here he makes the *Scripture* as much a Rule for *matters of Faith*, as the *Laws* of the Land are for *Civil matters*. And in his *Reply* to Mr. *Chillingworth*, he hath a *Chapter* of above 150 Pages, the *Title* whereof is, *Scripture is not the onely Rule of Faith*; which (had he with Mr. *S.* believed *Oral Tradition* to be the ſole Rule of Faith) had been as abſurd as it would be to write a *Book* to prove that *Turks* are not the *onely Chriſtians* in the World. Mr. *Creſſy* likewiſe (not very conſiſtently to himſelf) lays down this *Concluſion*; * *The entire Rule of Faith is contained not onely in Scripture, but likewiſe in unwritten Tradition.*

* De Verbo Dei, &c. L. 4. c. 2.

* Charity maintained. c. 2. Sect. 3.

* Exomol. c. 20.

§ 2. Now all this is as contrary as can be to Mr. *Ruſhworth's* new Rule of Faith. Therefore Mr. *White* ſays *, *They ſpeak ill who teach that ſome things are known in the Church*

* Tabul. Suffrag. p. 96.

Church from Scripture, ſome by Tradition. And Mr. *Holden* (in oppoſition to thoſe who make Scripture any part of the Rule of Faith) advances one of the moſt wild and uncharitable Poſitions that ever I yet met withall, *viz.* * *That if one ſhould believe all the Articles of the Catholick Faith*, &c. *for this reaſon becauſe he thought they were all expreſly revealed in Scripture, or implicitely contained ſo as they might be deduced from thence, and would not have believed them had he not judged that they might be evinced from Scripture; yet this man could be no true Catholick: Becauſe* (as he tells us afterwards *) *we muſt receive* the Chriſtian Doctrine *as coming to us by Tradition; for onely by this means (excluding the Scriptures) Chriſt hath appointed revealed Truths to be received and communicated.* In the mean time Cardinal *Perron* (unleſs he altered his mind) is in a ſad caſe, who believed the *Authority of Tradition* it ſelf for this reaſon, becauſe *it was founded in Scripture.*

* Analyſ. Fid. L. 1. c. 6.

* C. 8.

§ 3. And this *fundamental* difference about the *Rule of Faith*, between the *generality* of their *Divines* and Mr. *S*'s *ſmall party*, is fully acknowledged by the Traditioniſts themſelves. Dr. *Holden* ſays *, That *their Divines who reſolve Faith according to the common Opinion, do inevitably fall into that ſhamefull Circle* (of proving the Divine Authority of the Scripture by the Church, and the Infallibility

* L. 1. c. 9.

lity of the Church back again by the Scripture) *becauſe they dare not build their Faith upon the natural evidence and certainty of Tradition.* So that Dr. *Holden*'s way of reſolving Faith, is different from the *common Opinion* of their *Divines*, which he ſays * *does not differ from the Opinion of thoſe who reſolve their Faith into the private Spirit*; and this (according to Mr. *White* *) is the very way of the *Calviniſts*, and *of the abſurdeſt Sects.* Nay, Mr. *White* ſays farther *, That he will be content *to ſuffer all the puniſhment that is due to Calumniators, if the Roman Divines* (he there ſpeaks of) *do not hold the ſame Rule of Faith with the Calviniſts, and all the abſurdeſt Sects.* So that it ſeems that the *Calviniſts*, &c. do not in their *Rule of Faith* differ from the *Papiſts*, but onely from Mr. *White*, Mr. *S.* &c. Now the *Divines* he there ſpeaks of, are the *Cenſors* of Doctrines at *Rome*, according to whoſe advice his *infallible Holineſs* and the *Cardinals* of the *Inquiſition* do uſually proceed in cenſuring of Doctrines. Concerning theſe *Divines* he goes on to expoſtulate in this manner; * *Shall we endure theſe men to ſit as Cenſors and Judges of Faith, who agree with Hereticks in the very firſt Principle which diſtinguiſhes Catholicks from Hereticks?* Again *, *Theſe are thy gods* O Rome! *upon theſe thou dependeſt, whilſt prating Ignorance triumphs in the Roman Cellege.* And he ſays the ſame like-

* L. 1. c. 3.

* Exetaſ. p. 70.

* Ibid.

* Ib. p. 73.

* P. 144.

likewiſe of the generality of their *School-Divines*, whom he calls *Scepticks*, becauſe they do not own his *Demonſtrative* way. Inſomuch that he tells us *, *That few ſound parts are left uninfected with this Plague of Scepticiſm* *; *that this is an univerſal Gangrene* *; *that there are but few that go the way of Demonſtration, and theſe are either wearied out, or elſe live retiredly, or deſpair of any remedy of theſe things.* And indeed all along that *Book* he bemoans *himſelf* and *his Traditionary Brethren* as a deſolate and forlorn Party, who have *Truth* on their ſide, but want *company* and encouragement. So he tells us *, *That the true* ſcientifical *Divines dare not profeſs their knowledge, leſt they ſhould be expoſed by the Sophiſters* of their Church *to the deriſion and ſcorn either of their Judges or of the People.*

* P. 64.

* P. 149.

* P. 67, 68.

* P. 101.

§ 4. So that upon examination of the whole matter, it appears that Mr. *S*'s *Demonſtration* proceeds upon a falſe *Suppoſition*, That it is the *perſwaſion* of their *preſent Church*, that *Tradition* is the *ſole Rule of Faith.* For there is no ſuch matter; unleſs Mr. *S.* mean by *their Church* a few private perſons, who are look'd upon by thoſe who have the chief power in their Church as *Heretical:* as we may reaſonably conjecture by the proceedings at *Rome* againſt Mr. *White*; many of whoſe Books are there condemned *, as *containing things manifeſtly Heretical, erroneous*

* Exetaſ. p. 9.

in

in the Faith, raſh, ſcandalous, ſeditious, and falſe reſpectively, &c. And all this done, notwithſtanding that the chief ſubject of thoſe Books is the explication and defence of this moſt *Catholick* Principle, *That Oral Tradition is the only Rule of Faith.* To ſum up then the whole buſineſs: If nothing be to be owned for Chriſtian Doctrine (as the *Traditioniſts* ſay) but what is the general perſwaſion of thoſe who are acknowledged to be in the communion of the *Roman Catholick* Church; then much leſs can this *Principle* (*That Oral Tradition is the ſole Rule of Faith*) which is pretended to be the foundation of the whole Chriſtian Doctrine, be received as deſcended from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*; ſince it is ſo far from being the general perſwaſion of *that Church at the preſent*, that it has been, and ſtill is generally diſowned. But Mr. *White* has a *ſalvo* for this. For although he grant *, That *very many of their School-men maintain that Tradition is neceſſary only for ſome Points, not clearly expreſſed in Scripture, whence* (he ſays) *it ſeems to follow that they build not the whole Body of their Faith upon Tradition:* yet he tells us *there is a vaſt difference betwixt relying on Tradition, and ſaying or thinking we do ſo.* Suppoſe there be; yet I hope that mens ſaying that they do not relie on *Tradition* as their only Rule, is a better evidence that they do not, than any mans ſurmiſe to the contrary is that they do, though

* Apol. p. 38.

though they think and ſay they do not; which is in effect to ſay that they do, though we have as much aſſurance as we can have that they do not. Beſides, how is this Rule *ſelf-evident to all, even to the Rude Vulgar as to its ruling power* (as Mr. *S.* affirms it is) when the greateſt part even of the *Learned* among them *think* and *ſay* that it is not the *only Rule*? But Mr. *White* endeavours to illuſtrate this dark point by a * *ſimilitude*, which is to this ſenſe; As the *Scepticks* who deny *this Principle*, *That Contradictions cannot be true at once*, yet in their lives *and civil actions proceed as if they owned it*: So the *Schoolmen*, though they deny Tradition to be the only Rule of their Faith, yet by reſolving their Faith into the Church which owns this *Principle*, they do alſo in practice own it, though they ſay they do not. So that the generality of learned *Papiſts* are juſt ſuch *Catholicks* as the *Scepticks* are *Dogmatiſts*, that is a company of abſurd people that confute their *Principles* by their *practice*. According to this reaſoning, I perceive the *Proteſtants* will prove as good *Catholicks* as any, for they do only *think* and *ſay* that *Tradition* is not the *Rule* of Faith; but that they practically relie upon it, Mr. *S.* hath paſt his word for them: For he aſſures us * (and we may relie upon a man that writes nothing but Demonſtration) that *if we look narrowly into the bottom of our hearts, we ſhall diſcover the natural method*

* Ib. p. 39.

* P. 30. & 31.

thod of Tradition to have unawares ſettled our Judgments concerning Faith; however when our other Concerns awake deſign in us, we proteſt againſt it, and ſeem perhaps to our unreflecting ſelves to embrace and hold to the mere guidance of the Letter of Scripture. So that in reality we are as good *Catholicks*, and as true *holders to Tradition* as any *Papiſt* of them all, at the bottom of our thoughts and in our ſettled judgments; however we have taken upan humour to *proteſt* againſt it, and *may ſeem perhaps to our unreflecting ſelves* to be Proteſtants.

§ 5. Thus much may ſuffice to have ſpo-
* P. 173. ken to his *two* great *Arguments*; *or* * *as he* (*good man*) *unfortunately calls them Demonſtrations*; which yet to ſay truth are not properly *his*, but the *Authors* of *Ruſhworth's* Dialogues, the main foundation of which *Book* is the ſubſtance of theſe Demonſtrati-
* P. 163. ons. Only before I take leave of them, I cannot but reflect upon a paſſage of Mr. *S's** wherein he tells his Readers that they are not *obliged to bend their brains to ſtudy his Book with that ſeverity as they would do an Euclid*; meaning perhaps one of Mr. *White's Euclids*; for it does not appear by his way of Demonſtration that ever he dealt with any other. As for the true *Euclid*, I ſuppoſe any one that hath taſted his Writings, will at the reading of Mr. *S's* unbend his *brains* without bidding, and ſmile to ſee himſelf ſo demurely diſcharged from a *ſtudy* ſo abſurd and ridiculous.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

§ 1. I Should now take into conſideration his Ninth *Diſcourſe*, in which he pretends to *open the incomparable ſtrength of the Churches humane Authority, and the Advantages which accrue to it by the ſupernatural aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt:* But that there is nothing material in it, which hath not been anſwered already. Only I deſire him to explain, how the ſupernatural Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt can (according to his Principles) add to our aſſurance of the certainty of Tradition. Becauſe we can have no greater certainty of the ſupernatural Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, than we have that there is an Holy Ghoſt, and of this we can have no certainty (according to Mr. *S.*) but by Tradition, which conveys this Doctrine to us. And if Tradition of it ſelf can infallibly aſſure us that there are ſupernatural Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt, then a man muſt know that Tradition is infallible antecedently to his knowledge of any ſupernatural Aſſiſtance. And if ſo, what can any ſupernatural Aſſiſtance add to my aſſurance of the certainty of Tradition, which I do ſuppoſe to be infallible before I can know of any ſupernatural Aſſiſtance? Can any thing be more ludicrous, than to build firſt all our certainty of the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt upon the

Concerning ſome other advantages of Tradition, &c.

the certainty of Tradition, and then afterwards to make the certainty of Tradition to relie upon the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt? As if that could contribute to our aſſurance of the certainty of Tradition, which unleſs Tradition be firſt ſuppoſed certain, is it ſelf wholly uncertain.

§ 2. The Concluſion of this Ninth *Diſcourſe* is ſomewhat Ecſtatical; poſſibly from a ſudden diſorder of his fancy upon the contemplation of his own performances, to ſee what a *Man* he has made himſelf (with the help of *Ruſhworth's Dialogues*) or rather what his *Party* has made him by the *Office* they put upon him: For it ſeems (by his telling) * Mr. *Creſſy* and the reſt are ordained to cajoll the *Fools*, *leaving him the way of Reaſon and Principles*; and that himſelf is choſen out to Demonſtrate to the *Wiſe*, or *thoſe who judge of* things *per altiſſimas cauſas*. In the diſcharge of which glorious Office he declares that he *intends no Confutation of thoſe Authors* which Mr. *Creſſy* and others have medled with: *Tet if any will be ſo charitable as to judge he hath ſolidly confuted* them, *becauſe he hath radically and fundamentally overthrown all their Arguments*, &c. he ſhall rejoice and be thankfull. That the * *intelligent Reader* (*for he writes to none but ſuch*) may alſo rejoice with him, I ſhall recite the whole paſſage, for it is thick of Demonſtration, and as likely as any in his Book to have the *altiſſimas cauſas* contained in it.

* P. 165. & 166.

* P. 159.

§ 3. * *It*

§ 3. * *It would require a large Volume to unfold particularly how each virtue contributes to ſhew the inerrable indeficiency of Tradition, and how the Principles of almoſt each Science are concerned in demonſtrating its Certainty:* Arithmetick *lends her Numbring and Multiplying Faculty, to ſcan the vaſt Number of Teſtifiers*; Geometry *her Proportions to ſhew a kind of infinite ſtrength of Certitude in Chriſtian Tradition, above thoſe Atteſtations which breed Certainty in humane Affairs*; Logick *her skill to frame and make us ſee the connexions it has with the Principles of our Underſtanding*; Nature *her Laws of Motion and Action*; Morality *her firſt Principle that nothing is done* gratis *by a cognoſcitive Nature, and that the Body of Traditionary Doctrine is moſt conformable to Practical Reaſon*: Hiſtorical Prudence *clears the Impoſſibility of an* undiſcernable *revolt from Points ſo deſcended and held ſo Sacred*; Politicks *ſhew this to be the beſt way imaginable to convey down ſuch a Law as it concerns every man to be skilfull in*; Metaphyſicks *engages the Eſſences of Things, and the very notion of* Being *which fixes every Truth, ſo eſtabliſhing the ſcientifical Knowledges which ſpring from each particular Nature by their firſt Cauſes or Reaſons exempt from change or motion.* Divinity *demonſtrates it moſt worthy God and moſt conducive to bring Mankind to Bliſs. Laſtly,* Controverſie *evidences the total uncertainty of a*

* P. 93.

ny thing concerning Faith if this can be uncertain, and makes uſe of all the reſt to eſtabliſh the certainty of this Firſt Principle. A very fit concluſion for ſuch *Demonſtrations* as went before. It is well Mr. *S. writes to none but intelligent Readers*; for were it not a thouſand pities, that ſo manly, and ſolid, and convincing a diſcourſe as this ſhould be caſt away upon fools?

SECT. XII.

Mr. *S*'s Corollaries conſidered.

§ 1. AS for his *Corollaries*, ſuppoſing them to be rightly deduced from his former Diſcourſes, they muſt of neceſſity fall with them. For they ſignifie nothing but upon this ſuppoſition that his fore-going Diſcourſes are true. And yet this being granted, it were eaſie to ſhew that moſt of them are groſly faulty. For, *Firſt*, Several of them are plainly coincident. The *ſecond*, *viz. None can with right pretend to be a Church but the followers of Tradition*, is the very ſame in ſenſe with the 11*th*, viz. *No company of men hang together like a Body of a Chriſtian Commonwealth or Church, but that which adheres to Tradition.* So likewiſe the 12*th* and 14*th* are contained in the 15*th*: The 16*th*, and 17*th*, in the 19*th*: The 16*th*, 17*th*, 18*th*, and 19*th* in the 21*ſt*. And the 32*d* and 34*th* in the 31*ſt*. *Secondly*, Divers of them are manifeſtly abſurd, as the 12*th*, 13*th*,

13*th*, 14*th*, 16*th*, 17*th*, 18*th*, 19*th*, the ſum of which is, That there is *no arguing againſt Tradition from Scripture, or the Authority of the Church, or Fathers and Councils, or from Hiſtory and Teſtimonial Writings, or from contrary Tradition, or Reaſon, or any Inſtances whatſoever*; which is as much as to ſay, If this *Propoſition* be true, *That Tradition is certain*, then it cannot by any kind of Argument be proved to be falſe. But is this any peculiar Conſectary from the truth of this *Propoſition*? Doth not the ſame follow from every Propoſition? That if it be true, it cannot be proved to be falſe; yet no man was ever yet ſo frivolous, as to draw ſuch a conſequence from the ſuppoſed truth of any Propoſition. His 23*d* alſo is ſingularly abſurd, That *there is no poſſibility of arguing at all againſt Tradition rightly underſtood, or the living voice of the Catholick Church, with any ſhew of Reaſon.* Theſe are large words. It might have contented a reaſonable man to have ſaid, that no good Argument could be brought againſt it: But he is jealous of his *Hypotheſis*, and can never think it ſafe till it be ſhot-free; nor will that content him, but it muſt be alſo impoſſible for any one to make a *ſhew* of ſhooting at it. This were, I confeſs, a peculiar privilege of Mr. *S*'s *Diſcourſes* above other mens; if they were (as he ſays) by evidence of Demonſtration ſo ſecured, that not only no ſubſtantial Argument could

be brought againſt them, but that even the moſt ſubtile *Schoolman* of them all ſhould not be able to come near them with ſo much as a *videtur quod non.* But it may be he means no more by this *Corollary*, than what he ſaid in the 18*th*, viz. *That no ſolid Argument from Reaſon can be brought againſt Tradition:* If ſo, then the ſenſe of his 23*d Corollary* muſt be this, That there is no poſſibility of arguing at all againſt Tradition with any *ſolid ſhew*, or *ſubſtantial ſhadow* of Reaſon; which would be a little inconvenient. I will inſtance but in one more, his 40*th*, which is this, *The knowledge of Traditions Certainty is the firſt knowledge or Principle in Controverſial Divinity*; i. e. *without which nothing is known or knowable in that Science.* Which is to infer, that becauſe he hath with much pains proved the certainty of Tradition, therefore it is *ſelf evident*, i. e. needed no proof. Nay, it is to conclude the preſent matter in Controverſie and that which is the main debate of his *Book* to be the *firſt Principle* in Controverſial Divinity, *i. e.* ſuch a Propoſition as every one ought to grant before he can have any right to diſpute about it. This is a very prudent courſe, to make *begging the queſtion* the *firſt Principle in Controverſie*; which would it but be granted, I am very much of his mind that the *method* he takes would be the beſt way to make *Controverſie* a *Science*; becauſe he that ſhould have the luck or boldneſs

neſs to beg firſt, would have it in his power to make what he pleaſed certain.

§ 2. Were it worth while, I might farther purſue the Abſurdities of his *Corollaries*. For they are not ſo terrible as he makes ſhew of, by his telling Dr. *Caſaubon* *, That *Sure-footing and its Corollaries may put him out of his Wits:* Which though intended for an Affront to the Doctor, yet it may be mollified with a good interpretation; for if the reading of wild and phantaſtical ſtuff be apt to diſorder a very learned head, then ſo far Mr. S's ſaying may have truth in it. * P. 330.

It remains only that I requite his 41 *Corol.* not with an equal number, but with two or three natural *Conſectaries* from the Doctrine of his Book.

Firſt, No man can certainly underſtand the meaning of any Book whatſoever, any farther than the Contents of it are made known to us by a concurrent *Oral Tradition.* For the Arguments whereby *he* and Mr. *Ruſhworth* endeavour to prove it impoſſible without *Tradition* to attain to the certain ſenſe of Scripture, do equally extend to all other Books.

Secondly, The memory of matters of Fact done long ago may be better preſerved by *general Rumor* than by publick *Records.* For this is the plain Engliſh of that Aſſertion, That Oral Tradition is a better and more ſecure way of Conveyance than Writing.

Thirdly, That the Generality of Papiſts are no Chriſtians. For if (as he affirms) Tradition be the ſole Rule of Faith, and thoſe who diſown this Rule be *ipſo facto cut off from the Root of Faith*, i. e. unchriſtian'd; And if (as I have ſhewn) the Generality of Papiſts do diſown this Rule: Then it is plain that they are no Chriſtians.

THE

THE Rule of Faith.

PART IV.

Teſtimonies concerning the Rule of Faith.

SECT. I.

§ 1. THus far *in the way of Reaſon and Principles.* The reſt is *Note book Learning*, which he tells us * he is *not much a Friend to*; and there is no kindneſs loſt, for it is as little a Friend to him and his Cauſe as he can be to it. I ſhall firſt examine the *Authorities* he brings for *Tradition*; and then produce expreſs *Teſtimonies* in behalf of *Scripture.* In both which I ſhall be very brief; in the one, becauſe his Teſtimonies require no long Anſwer; in the other, becauſe it would be to little purpoſe to trouble Mr. *S.* with many *Fathers*, who for ought appears by his *Book* is acquainted with none but *Father White*, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter. By the way, I cannot

Mr. S's Teſtimonies examined.

* P. 337.

much blame him for the courſe he uſes to take with other mens Teſtimonies, becauſe it is the onely way that a man in his circumſtances can take; otherwiſe, nothing can be in it ſelf more unreaſonable, than to pretend to anſwer Teſtimonies by ranking them under ſo many *faulty Heads*; and having ſo done, magiſterially to require his *Adverſary* to vindicate them, by ſhewing that they do not fall under ſome of thoſe Heads, though he have not ſaid one word againſt any of them particularly; nay, though he have not ſo much as recited any one of them; for then the Trick would be ſpoiled, and his Catholick Reader who perhaps may believe him in the *general*, might ſee Reaſon not to do ſo if he ſhould deſcend to *particulars*, which (as he well obſerves) would make his * *Diſcourſe to look with a contingent Face.*

* P. 161.

§ 2. I begin with his three *Authorities* from Scripture; which when I conſider, I ſee no reaſon why he (of all men) ſhould find fault with my Lord Biſhop of *Down's* *Diſſuaſive* for being ſo * *thin and ſleight in Scripture-Citations.* Nor do I ſee how he will anſwer it to Mr. *Ruſhworth*, for tranſgreſſing that prudent *Rule* of his, *viz.* * *That the Catholick ſhould never undertake to convince his Adverſary out of Scripture*, &c. For which he gives this ſubſtantial Reaſon, * becauſe *this were to ſtrengthen his Opponent in his*

* P. 320.

* Dial. 2. Sect. 14.

* Ibid.

own

own Ground and Principle, viz. *That all is to be proved out of Scripture*; which he tells us preſently after is no more fit to convince, than *a Beetle is to cut withall*; meaning it perhaps of *Texts* ſo applied as theſe which follow. * *This ſhall be to you a direct way, ſo that Fools cannot err in it.* * *This is my Covenant with them, ſaith the Lord; my Spirit which is in thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth ſhall not depart from thy mouth, and from the mouth of thy Seed, and from the mouth of thy Seeds ſeed from henceforth for ever.* * *I will give my Law in their bowels, and in their hearts will I write it:* From which *Texts* if Mr. *S.* can prove *Tradition to be the onely Rule of Faith*, any better than the *Philoſophers Stone* or the *Longitude* may be proved from the 1. *Cap.* of *Geneſis*, I am content they ſhould paſs for valid Teſtimonies: Though I might require of him (by his own Law) before theſe *Texts* can ſignifie any thing to his purpoſe, to demonſtrate that this is the Traditionary ſenſe of theſe Texts, and that it hath been univerſally in all Ages received by the Church under that Notion; and then to ſhew how it comes to paſs that ſo many of the *Fathers*, and of their own *Commentators* have interpreted them to another ſenſe: And *laſtly*, to ſhew how Scripture which has no certain ſenſe but from Tradition, and of the ſenſe whereof Tradition cannot aſſure us, unleſs

* Iſa. 35. 8.
* Iſa. 59. 21.
* Jer. 31.

unleſs it be the *Rule of Faith*; I ſay, how *Scripture* can prove Tradition to be the *Rule of Faith*, which can prove nothing at all unleſs Tradition be firſt proved to be the *Rule of Faith*. This I take to be as *ſhamefull a Circle* as that wherewith Dr. *Holden* upbraids the generality of his *Brethren*.

§ 3. I proceed to his *Authorities* from *Fathers* and *Councils*; all which (not one of them excepted) he hath taken out of Mr. *White's Tabulæ Suffragiales*, without the leaſt acknowledgement from whom he had them. And that it might be evident that he had not conſulted the Books themſelves for them, he hath taken them with all their faults, and with the very ſame errours of Citation which Mr. *White* had been guilty of before him. So that though he is pleas'd to ſay of himſelf that * *he is a bad Tranſcriber*, yet I muſt do him that right, to aſſure the Reader that he does it very punctually and exactly.

* P. 239.

§ 4. He begins with *Councils*, of which he tells us *he will onely mention three in ſeveral Ages.*

The firſt is the *Firſt Synod of Lateran.* One might have expected, after he had told us he would mention three in ſeveral Ages, he ſhould have produced them according to the order of Time, and have begun with the Council of *Sardica*, which was near 300 years before the *Lateran.* But there was a good reaſon why the *Lateran* ſhould be firſt

firſt produced, *viz.* becauſe it is mentioned before the other in Mr. *White*'s Book. Well, but what ſays this *Synod*? *We all confeſs unanimouſly and conſequently, with one heart and mouth, the Tenets and Sayings of the Holy Fathers; adding nothing, ſubtracting nothing of thoſe things which are delivered us by them; and we believe as the Fathers have believed, we Preach ſo as they have taught.* The force of which *Teſtimony* Mr. *S.* lays upon the Word *delivered*, as if that Word where-ever it is met with in *Councils* or *Fathers*, muſt needs be underſtood of *oral delivery*; whereas it is a general Word indifferently uſed for conveyance either by *writing*, or *word of mouth*. In this place it plainly refers to the *writings* of particular *Fathers*, out of whom a long catalogue of Teſtimonies againſt the Hereſie of the *Monothelites* had been read juſt before this Declaration of the Synod. Now what ſignifies this to *oral Tradition*'s being the *Rule of Faith*, that this Synod declares her Faith, in oppoſition to the hereſie of the *Monothelites*, to be conſonant in all things to thoſe Teſtimonies which had been produced out of the Fathers?

The next is the *Council* of *Sardica*; out of an *Epiſtle* of which *Council* he cites theſe words, *We have received this Doctrine, we have been taught ſo, we hold this Catholick Tradition, Faith and Confeſſion.* Which are general

general words, and differently applicable to *Oral Tradition*, or Writing, or both. But be they what they will, Mr. *S.* ought not to have been ignorant, that this Council was rejected by St. *Austin* and other Orthodox Fathers, as * *Binius* acknowledges; and which is more, that the latter part of this *Epistle* (out of which part Mr. *S.* cites these words) which contains a *Confession of Faith*, is by * *Baronius* (and after him by *Binius*) proved to have been surreptitiously added. For though it be found in *Theodoret*, and mentioned by *Sozomon*; yet *Baronius* thinks that it was the *Arian Confession* composed by the *false-Synod* of *Sardica* which sate at the same time; and that *Sozomen* lighting upon it, perhaps mistook it for the Confession of the Orthodox Synod of the same name. However that be, he proves out of *Athanasius*, and from the Testimony both of the Eastern and Western Bishops, that the Council of *Sardica did not so much as add one word or tittle, no nor so much as explain any thing in the Nicene Faith.* But Mr. *White* says nothing of this, and therefore Mr. *S.* could not, who is no *Speculator* in these matters, but onely as a *Testifier delivers down* these authorities to us as he *received them by hand* from Mr. *White*; and if the word *Tradition* be but in them, they are *Demonstrative.*

* Concil. Tom. 1.

* An. 347.

As for his *Testimonies* from the 2*d* Council of *Nice* (which he calls the 7*th General Council*

Council) who pretended their Doctrine of *Image-worſhip* to have deſcended to them by an *uninterrupted Tradition*, and proved it moſt doughtily by Texts of Scripture ridiculouſly wreſted, by impertinent ſayings out of obſcure and counterfeit Authours, and by *fond* and *immodeſt Storïes* (as is acknowledged by Pope * *Adrian* the *6th*) *of Apparitions* and *Womens Dreams*, &c. for which I refer the Reader to the *Council* it ſelf; which is ſuch a meſs of Fopperies, that if a *general Council* of Atheiſts had met together with a deſign to abuſe Religion by talking ridiculouſly concerning it, they could not have done it more effectually: I ſay, as for his Teſtimonies from this Council, I ſhall refer Mr. *S.* to that *Weſtern Council* under *Charles the Great*, which a little after at *Franckford* condemned, and alſo fully confuted the Deciſions of this Council, calling their pretended *Tradition of Image-worſhip* [putidiſſimam Traditionem] *a moſt ſtinking Tradition.*

* Quodlibet 6. cited by *Eſpencæus* in 2*d* Epiſt. ad Tim. c. 4.

Theſe are his authorities from Councils; *Where* (ſays he) *we ſee General Councils relying on the Teaching of the Fathers or foregoing Church, and on the Churches Tradition as their Rule*, &c. Where does he *ſee* any ſuch matter? Or where does he *ſee General Councils?* Was the Council of *Lateran* a General one? Or was the Council of *Sardica?* If it was let him ſhew how the

2*d.* of

2*d.* of *Nice* could be the *7th General Council.* Mr. *White* muſt write more explicitely, and ſay which are *General Councils*, which not, otherwiſe he will lead his friends into dangerous miſtakes.

§ 4. *After ancient Councils* (not ſo ancient neither) *let us* (ſays he) *give a glance at Fathers. Glance* is a modeſt word, and yet I doubt whether ever the *Fathers* had ſo much as that from him. Before I ſpeak particularly to his Teſtimonies from the *Fathers*, I ſhall mind him of what Mr. *Ruſhworth* ſays in general, *viz.* * *That who ſeeks Tradition in the Fathers, and to convince it by their Teſtimony, takes an hard task upon him*, &c. Again *, *As in other Points, ſo even in this of the Reſolution of Faith, as Doctours ſeem to differ now adays, ſo might the Fathers alſo.* If this be true, Mr. *S.* is not likely by a few Teſtimonies out of the *Fathers* to prove that *Tradition* is the ſole *Rule of Faith.* But let us ſee what he has done towards it.

* Dial. 3. Sect. 13.

* Ibid.

He begins with a ſaying of Pope *Celeſtine* to the Fathers of the *Epheſin* Council. *Now therefore we muſt act with a common endeavour to preſerve things believed, and retained to this very time by Succeſſion from the Apoſtles. Binius*'s other *Reading* [of διδαχῆς for διαδοχῆς] quite ſpoils the *force* of this Citation which Mr. *S.* puts upon the word *Succeſſion.* But read it how he will; why may not the Chriſtian Doctrine be ſaid to come by

by Succeſſion from the Apoſtles, when it is tranſmitted to us by Scripture, as well as when by *oral Tradition?* I am ſure the ſame *Celeſtine* in an *Epiſtle* to *Cyril*, commends him for defending the Faith by *Scripture*, *This* (ſays he) *is a great Triumph of our Faith, to demonſtrate our Opinions ſo ſtrongly, and to overthrow the contrary by Teſtimonies from Scripture.* And neither in this *Epiſtle*, nor the other, does he make any mention of *Oral Tradition.*

Next he cites that known place in *Irenæus*, *But what if the Apoſtles had not left us the Scriptures, ought we not to follow the Order of Tradition*, &c? This makes clearly againſt him; for it implies, that now the *Apoſtles* have *left us the Scriptures*, we ought to follow *them.* The other paſſage he cites out of *Irenæus*, *Lib.* 1. *c.* 3. is a clear eviction that he did not conſult the Book. For he puts two ſayings together which he had met with in Mr. *White* immediately one after the other; and becauſe Mr. *White* had cited *Lib.* 1. *c.* 3. for the firſt ſaying, and brought in the other immediately upon it with an (*Et rurſus*) *Again*, &c. Therefore Mr. *S.* (who is of a right Traditionary temper, which is to take things eaſily upon truſt himſelf, and require Demonſtration from others) concluded that theſe *ſayings* were in the ſame place, though in truth they are in ſeveral Books. As for the Teſtimony it ſelf, there is nothing

thing in it to Mr. *S*'s purpoſe beſides the word *Tradition*, which *Irenæus* does often apply to Scripture as well as *Oral Tradition*; and there is nothing in this place to determine it to *Oral Tradition*.

His Teſtimonies out of *Origen* will do him leſs ſtead: For every one that hath been converſant in the Writings of that *Father*, knows what he means by the *Churches Tradition* preſerved *by order of Succeſſion, viz.* The myſtical Interpretations of Scripture, which (he ſays) were delivered by the Apoſtles to the Governours of the Church, and by them down from hand to hand. If this be the *Tradition* Mr. *S.* contends for, *Origen* is at his ſervice; if it be not, I aſſure him he is not for his turn.

Next comes *Tertullian*, concerning whom (as alſo *Origen*) the Papiſt upon occaſion thinks it enough to reply in St. *Hierom*'s words *, *As for* Tertullian, *I have nothing to ſay of him but that he is not a man of the Church.* Whatever he was, theſe are his words, *If thou beeſt but a Chriſtian, believe what is* [traditum] *deliver'd.* And here's nothing again but the word *deliver'd*; which (as I have ſaid) is indifferent to *Written* or *Oral Tradition*, if the Circumſtances do not determine it to one; as here they do (very unluckily for Mr. *S.*) to the *Scripture*. For he diſputes here againſt *Marcion*, who denied the Fleſh of Chriſt; and who to maintain that

* Adverſ. Helvid.

that, denied his Nativity, and * expunged the whole Hiſtory of it out of the Goſpel; *But* (ſaith *Tertullian*) *by what authority doſt thou this? If thou be a Prophet, foretell ſomething; If an Apoſtle, preach publickly; If Apoſtolical, be of the Apoſtles mind; If no more but a Chriſtian, believe what is delivered.* And where delivered? But in thoſe *Inſtruments* or Books of the Goſpel out of which (as *Tertullian* immediately before tells us) *Marcion* had made bold to expunge this Story.

* His opinor conſiliis tor Originalia Inſtrumenta Chriſti delere *Marcion* auſus eſt, ne Caro ejus probaretur. Ex qua, ore te, autoritate, &c.

As for his Teſtimonies out of *Athanaſius*, the two firſt of them prove nothing but that *Faith comes down from our Anceſtours*, or was by them *delivered to us*; which no body denies: Nor is there a word in either of them concerning *oral*, in oppoſition to *written Tradition*. The third Teſtimony is out of an *Epiſtle* to *Epictetus*, to whom *Athanaſius* writing concerning thoſe who held Chriſt's Body to be Conſubſtantial with his Divinity, tells him this was ſo groſs a conceit that it needed no ſolicitous confutation; but that it would be a ſufficient anſwer to ſay in general *the Orthodox Church was not of that mind, our Fathers did not think ſo.* From whence Mr. *S.* infers that *Tradition is held by him a ſole ſufficient Rule of Faith, and the onely Anſwer to be given why we reject Points from Faith*, &c. But if he had conſulted the Book, he would not have in-

ferred that this was *the onely Anſwer to be given*, &c. For it immediately follows, *But leſt from our being wholly ſilent, the Inventers of evil things ſhould take occaſion to be more impudent, it will be good to recite a few paſſages out of Scripture*, &c. And from thence he confutes them at large. It was ſo groſs an Errour that he thought it might be ſufficient, without bringing particular arguments out of Scripture againſt it, to ſay that it was contrary to the ancient Faith; but yet leſt they ſhould (if he had ſaid no more) have taken boldneſs from thence, and thought that nothing more could be ſaid againſt it, therefore he confutes it from particular Texts of Scripture. And what in his opinion was the *ſufficient Rule of Faith*, Mr. *S.* might have ſeen at the beginning of this *Epiſtle* from theſe words, *That Faith which was profeſſed by the Fathers in that Council* (*viz.* the *Nicene*) *according to the Scriptures, is to me ſufficient*, &c. It ſeems that Scripture was to him the Rule and Standard whereby to judge even the *Creeds* of General Councils.

Mr. *S.* ſays he will be ſhorter in the reſt, and ſo will I. For what is to be ſaid to Teſtimonies brought at a venture? when he that brings them, had he read the Books themſelves, could not have had the face to have brought them. Such is this out of * *Clem. Alexand. As if one of a Man becomes a Beaſt,*

* Stromat. L. 7.

a Beast, like those infected with Circe's *poyson; so he hath forfeited his being a Man of God and faithfull to our Lord, who spurns against Ecclesiastical Tradition, and leaps into Opinions of humane Election.* Mr. *S.* knows whose way of quoting this is, to pick a bit out of the midst of a Text that sounds something towards his purpose, and leave out the rest which would make it evident to be meant just contrary. Yet I cannot charge this wholly upon Mr. *S.* whose implicit Faith were it not for his culpable Ignorance might excuse him. But for his Seducer Mr. *White*, how he can acquit himself of so foul an imputation, I leave it to any ingenuous Papist to judge when I have nakedly set the whole passage before him. *Clemens* speaking of Hereticks who relinquish the Scripture, or abuse it by wresting it to their lusts, says, *Men who deal in matters of highest importance must needs commit great Errours, if they do not take and hold the RULE OF FAITH from Truth it self. For such men having once deviated from the right way, do likewise err in most particulars; probably because they have not the Faculty of distinguishing Truths and Falshoods perfectly exercised to chuse what ought to be chosen. For if they had this, they would be ruled by the Divine SCRIPTURES.* [*Therefore as if any of Mankind should become a Beast, in such sort as those who were* * *bewitched by* Circe; * φαρμαχθέσιν.

even ſo he hath loſt his being a Man of God and abiding faithfull to the Lord, who hath ſpurned againſt the Tradition of the Church, and skipt into the Opinions of humane Sects *,] (*not* of humane Election, as Mr. *S.* blindly following Mr. *Wh.* does moſt abſurdly tranſlate it,) *but he that hath returned from his Errours, and hearkned to the* SCRIPTURES, *and conformed his life to the Truth, is as it were advanced from a Man to a God.* At the ſame rate he goes on for ſeveral Pages together, taking the Scriptures for an *indemonſtrable Principle*, from which all Divine Doctrines are to be demonſtrated, and for the *Criterion* whereby they are to be tried; and charges the Hereticks in ſuch words as we cannot find fitter for our Adverſaries, *As* (ſays he) *naughty Boys ſhut out their School-maſter, ſo theſe drive the Prophecies out of the Church, ſuſpecting that they will chide and admoniſh them; and they patch together abundance of falſhoods and fictions that they may ſeem* RATIONALLY *not to admit the Scriptures.* Again, ſpeaking of theſe Hereticks affronting the Scriptures, he tells us *they oppoſe the* * *Divine Tradition with humane Doctrines* * *by other Traditions* [*delivered from hand to hand*] *that they may eſtabliſh a Sect or Hereſie.* Again he ſays, *they adulterate the Truth, and ſteal the Rule of Faith*, &c. *but for* ORAL *Frauds they ſhall have* WRITTEN *Puniſhments.* But enough

* αἱρέσεων.

* θεῖα παραδόσει.
* δι' ἑτέρων παρεγχειρήσεων.

enough of this; whoſoever deſires to ſee more of it, let him read on where theſe men to their own ſhame have directed us, and ſee whether any Proteſtant can ſpeak more fully and plainly in this Controverſie. The whole truſt of the Papiſts is upon the equivocal ſenſe of the word *Tradition*. Which word is commonly uſed by the *Fathers* to ſignifie to us the Scripture or *Divine Tradition* as *Clement* here calls it; but the *Papiſts* underſtand it of their *unwritten Tradition*, and to this they apply all thoſe paſſages in the *Fathers* where Tradition is honourably mentioned. So Mr. *L.* deals with us, in the Teſtimonies I have already examined: And there is nothing of argument in thoſe few which remain but from the ambiguity of this Word; which I need not ſhew of every one of them in particular, for whoſoever ſhall read them with this Key will find that they are of no force to conclude what he drives at.

§ 5. As for his Citations out of the Council of *Trent*, by which he would prove it to be the perſuaſion of their preſent Church, that *Tradition* is the ſole *Rule of Faith*; I have already ſhewn that that Council hath declared otherwiſe, and is otherwiſe underſtood by the chief of their own *Writers*. And therefore he did prudently to conceal in an, &c. thoſe choaking words, in which the *Council* declares it ſelf to *receive and honour, with equal pious affection and reverence, the Books of Scrip-*

ture and unwritten Traditions. And after a deal of ſhuffling, what a pitifull Account is it that he at laſt gives of that Council's putting Scripture conſtantly before *Tradition*, becauſe Scripture being interpreted by *Tradition*, is of the ſame Authority *as if an Apoſtle or Evangeliſt were preſent, and therefore no wonder they honour Scripture-Teſtimony ſo as to put it before Tradition*; which is to ſay, that becauſe Scripture is ſubordinate to *Tradition* and to be regulated by it, therefore it deſerves to be put before it. Beſides if *Scripture* and *Tradition* be but ſeveral ways of conveying the Evangelical and Apoſtolical Doctrine, why ſhould he imagine an *Evangeliſt* or *Apoſtle* to be more preſent by the Scripture than by *oral Tradition*? Eſpecially if it be conſidered, that he ſuppoſes Scripture to be an uncertain, and Tradition an infallible way of conveying this Doctrine.

SECT. II.

Teſtimonies on the behalf of Scripture.

§ 1. ALL that now remains, is to confirm the precedent *Diſcourſe* by Teſtimonies of the moſt eminent Perſons of the Church, in ſeveral Ages, in which I ſhall not need to be large, being ſo happily prevented by that full Account which is given, of the ſenſe of the *Ancients* in this matter in the *Anſwer* to *Labyrinthus Cantuarienſis*; which

which Mr. *S.* may if he pleaſe conſult for his farther Conviction.

§ 2. I begin with the Hiſtorical Account which *Euſebius* gives of committing the *Goſpel* to writing; which is to this purpoſe, *viz.* * *That the* Romans *were not content with the Doctrine Preached, unleſs it were alſo committed to writing; and therefore did earneſtly beg of Mark, Peter's Companion, that he would leave them a Monument in writing of that Doctrine which had been deliver'd to them by word of mouth. And this was the occaſion of the writing of St.* Mark's Goſpel. *And when* Peter *did underſtand that this Work was publiſh'd (being ſuggeſted by the Divine Revelation of the Holy Spirit) it is ſaid he was very much pleaſed with the ready and earneſt deſire of thoſe Perſons; and that by his Authority he confirmed this Writing, to the end that it might be every where read in the Church.* As for St. *Matthew* and St. *John*, he tells us *, *That of all the Diſciples they two onely have left monuments in Writing; of whom it is alſo reported they betook themſelves to write, being drawn thereto by neceſſity.* Matthew *after he had preached the Word of God to the* Jews, *and was reſolved to go to other Nations, wrote his* Goſpel *in the Language of his Countrey; and thus by the diligence and pains of Writing, did abundantly ſupply the want of his preſence to thoſe whom he left. And when* Mark *and*

* Hiſtor. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 14.

* Ibid. l. 3. c. 18.

Luke *had publiſhed their Goſpel, it is reported that* John *(who had always uſed to preach the Word without writing it) being at length wrought upon by the ſame reaſon did betake himſelf to write.* From this account it is clear, that the Apoſtles thought it neceſſary for the preſervation and ſecure conveyance of the Chriſtian Doctrine, that it ſhould be put into Writing; and that they judged this a better way to ſupply the want of their preſence, than *Oral Tradition.* Therefore the ſame *Authour* tells us *, *That the Diſciples, who immediately ſucceeded the Apoſtles, as they travelled to preach the Goſpel to thoſe who had not yet heard the Word of Faith, did with great* care alſo deliver to them the Writings *of the Holy Evangeliſts.* Again *, *That* Ignatius *as he travelled towards* Rome *(where he was to ſuffer) exhorted the Churches of every City to hold faſt the Tradition of the Apoſtles; which (as alſo by Writing he teſtified) for greater ſecurity* he held neceſſary *to be* copied in Writing.

* Ib. c. 31.

* Ib. c. 30.

§ 3. That the Hereticks of Old made the ſame pretence which the Papiſts make now, of *oral Tradition* in oppoſition to *Scripture*, the ſame *Euſebius* tells us; and withall, that *Books* are a ſufficient confutation of this pretence *. *Thoſe* (ſays he) *who were of the Hereſie of* Artemon, *ſaid that all their* Forefathers *and the* Apoſtles themſelves *had* received

* Ibid. L. 5. c. 27.

ceived *and* taught *the ſame things which they alſo did; and had preſerved the* true Teaching *unto the time of* Victor *Biſhop of* Rome, *whoſe Succeſſour* Zephyrinus *corrupted it. And this* (ſaith he) *would have great probability, were it not firſt of all contradicted by the Scripture; and next if there did not remain the Writings of other Brethren much more ancient than* Victor's *time*, &c. *in the Books of all whom Chriſt's Divinity is acknowledged.* And afterwards he tells us that theſe Hereticks did change and corrupt the Scriptures to bring them to their Opinions; ſo Mr. *S.* tells us that *the outward Letter of Scripture* ought to be corrected *by Tradition and Senſe written in mens hearts.*

St. *Hierom* alſo tells us *, That *the Hereticks were wont to ſay, we are the Sons of the Wiſe, who did from the beginning deliver down to us the Apoſtolical Doctrine*; but he adds, *that the true Sons of* Judah *adhere to the Scripture.*

* Comment. in Iſa. c. 19.

§ 4. That Scripture is ſufficiently plain in all things neceſſary.

St. Chryſoſtome *, *All things in the Divine Scriptures are plain and ſtreight. Whatſoever things are neceſſary are manifeſt.*

* In 2 Theſ. c. 2. Hom. 4.

St. *Auſtin* having ſpoken of the profoundneſs of Scripture, adds *, *Not that thoſe things which are neceſſary to Salvation are ſo hard to be come at: But* (ſaith he) *when one hath there attained Faith without which*

* Epiſt. 3.

which there is no pious and right living, there are beſides, many dark and myſterious things, &c. Again *, *The manner of ſpeech in Scripture how eaſie is it to all, though few can penetrate to the bottom of it? Thoſe things which it plainly contains, it ſpeaks without diſguiſe like a familiar Friend to the heart of the learned and unlearned.* How will Mr. *S.* reconcile this with his great Exception againſt Scripture? And what theſe things are, which are *plainly* contained in Scripture, the ſame *Father* tells us elſe-where in theſe words *, *Among thoſe things which are plainly ſet down in Scripture, all thoſe things are to be found which comprehend Faith and good Manners.* The ſame St. *Auſtin* (as alſo *Clement* in the Book which Mr. *White* quoted) for the underſtanding of obſcure Texts of Scripture directs us not to *Tradition*, but to the plain Texts without which he expreſly ſays * *there would be no way to underſtand them.*

* Ibid.

* De Doctr. Chriſt. L. 2. c. 9.

* De Unitat. Eccleſ. c. 5.

§ 5. That Scripture is ſo plain, as to be fit to determine Controverſies.

Juſtin ſure thought ſo, when diſputing with *Trypho*, concerning a point wherein the *Jew* had *Tradition* on his ſide, he told him *he would bring ſuch proofs* (to the contrary) *as no man could gain-ſay: Attend* (ſays he) *to what I ſhall recite out of the Holy Scriptures, proofs which need not to be explained, but onely to be heard.* Mr. *White* might

ight have found likewiſe much to this pur-
oſe in his *Clement.*

But not to tire my Reader in a Point which
he Ancients abound with, I ſhall only pro-
uce the judgment of *Conſtantine* * in that ſo- * Theodoret. Hiſt. L. 1. c. 7.
emn *Oration* of his to the Council of *Nice*;
herein he bewails their *mutual oppoſitions, ſpecially in Divine things*; concerning which
hey had *the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Re-
orded in Writing*; *For* (ſays he) *the Books
f the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, and the Ora-
les of the old Prophets, do evidently teach us
hat we ought to think of the Divine Majeſty.
Therefore laying aſide all ſeditious contention,
et us determine the matters in queſtion by Te-
imonies out of the Divine Writings.* Not a
word of any other Tradition but Scripture,
which was held evident enough in thoſe days,
though now Mr. *S.* tells us it is not ſufficient
to decide that Controverſie about the *Divini-
y of Chriſt.*

§ 6. Laſtly, That Scripture is the *Rule of Faith.*

Irenæus *, *The method of our Salvation we* * L. 3. c. 1.
*have not known by any other but thoſe men by
whom the Goſpel came to us, which then they
preached, but afterwards by the Will of God
delivered it to us in the Scriptures, to be for
the future the foundation and pillar of our
Faith.*

St. *Cyprian* the Church hath ever held a
good Catholick; yet Mr. *S.* * takes notice * P. 314.
that

that he erred in a Point of Faith, and perhaps the rather becauſe Mr. *Ruſhworth* * had told him that he was not theirs in this Controverſie. *For* (ſays he) *St.* Cyprian *ſeems to think that the Reſolution of Faith was to be made into Scripture, and not into Tradition.* But that we may not ſeem to accept of this of courteſie from him, nor yet wholly to deſpiſe it, I ſhall offer this one Teſtimony inſtead of many out of that *Father*; who being oppoſed with an Argument from Tradition, demands *, *Whence have you that Tradition? Comes it from the Authority of the Lord, and of the Goſpel, or from the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles? For God teſtifies that we are to do thoſe things which are written*, &c. *If it be commanded in the Goſpel, or contained in the Epiſtles or Acts of the Apoſtles, then let us obſerve it is as a Divine and Holy Tradition.*

* Dial. 3. Sect. 13.

* Epiſt. 74.

Hilary * commends *Conſtantius* the Emperour *for regulating his Faith only according to thoſe things which are written.* And to oblige him to deſerve this commendation, he adds, *He who refuſes this is Antichriſt, and who diſſembles in it is Anathema.*

* Ad Conſtant.

* *Optatus*, concerning the Controverſie with the *Donatiſts*, asks who ſhall be Judge? and anſwers himſelf, *the Scriptures*: Which he illuſtrates by the ſimilitude of a Father who delivered his Will orally to his Children while he was living, but when he was dying cauſed

* Lib. 5. de Schiſm. Donat.

caused it to be written *in lasting Tables*, to decide all Controversies that might happen among them after his death. The passage is large, and it is obvious to apply it.

Basil maintaining the *Doxology* as it was used in his days, says *, *Thus we received it from our Fathers*; but adds immediately, *This is not enough for us, that it is the Tradition of the Fathers, for they followed the Authority of the Scriptures, making its Testimonies the Principles upon which they built.* He has indeed in the same *Book* * a passage much insisted on by the Papists concerning unwritten Traditions; but withall he says those Traditions were *secretly* conveyed, which makes all the rest of no use to Mr. *S.*

* De Sp. Sancto c. 7.

* C. 27.

Chrysostome * having mentioned several Heresies, directs how they may be avoided, viz. *By attending to the Faith delivered, and looking upon all that disagrees from that as Adulterate. For* (says he) *as those who give Rules do not put men upon a curious enquiry after many measures, but bid them keep to the Rule given; so is it in Opinions. But no body will attend to the Scriptures; if we did, we should not only not fall into Errors our selves, but also rescue those that are deceived.* Again *, *If we would be throughly conversant in the Scriptures, we should be instructed both in right Opinions and a good Life.* Again, among the many *Sects of Christians* * *it will be easie to judge* of the right, *if we believe the Scriptures,*

* Hom. 8. in Epist. ad Heb. c. 5.

* Hom. 52. in Joh.

* Hom. 33. in Act. Apost.

Scriptures, becauſe theſe are plain and true. If any one agree with theſe, he is a Chriſtian; if he contradict them, he is far from this Rule.

St. *Auſtin* calls the Scripture * the *Divine Balance* for the weighing of Doctrines. Again, *the Holy Scripture* (ſays he) *fixeth the Rule of our Doctrine.* And accordingly himſelf uſes it both in his Diſpute with *Maximinus*, to whom he ſays *, *Neither ought I now to alledge the* Nicene *Council*, nor *thou that of* Ariminum; *for neither am I bound to the Authority of the one, nor thou of the other. Let us both conteſt with the Authorities of Scripture which are Witneſſes common to us both.* And alſo againſt the *Donatiſts* in theſe words *, *Let them if they can demonſtrate their Church not by the Talk and Rumors* [*or* Oral Tradition] *of the* Africans, *not by the Councils of their own Biſhops, not by the Books of their Diſputers, not by deceitfull Miracles,* &c. *but by the preſcript of the Law, Prophets,* &c. *i. e. by all the Canonical Authorities of the Holy Books.*

Hierom *ſaith* *, *Of thoſe things, which without the Authorities and Teſtimonies of the Scripture men invent of their own heads as from Apoſtolical Tradition, they are ſmitten with the Sword of God.*

Theophilus Alexandr. whom *Hierom* hath Tranſlated, calls Scripture more than once * *the Rule*, and the *Teſtimonies* of it the *firm foundations*

* De Bapt. Dont. Donat. L. 2. c. 6.

*Contr. Max. L. 3.

* De Unitat. Eccleſ. c. 16.

* Comment. in Agg. c. 1.

* Paſchal. L. 3.

foundations of Doctrine. And again saith *, *L. 2.
It comes from a Demoniacal spirit that men follow the Sophisms of humane minds, and think any thing Divine that wants the Authority of Scripture.

Theodoret * charges all Heresies upon the not following of Scripture, which he calls *the inflexible Rule of Truth.* Again, *We have learned the Rule of Opinions from the Divine Scripture.* * Hæret. Fabul. L. 5.

After the Fathers, I shall produce the Testimonies of two Eminent Persons of latter Times, *Gerson* and *Lyra.*

Gerson in his * *Book of the Tryal of Doctrines,* hath this remarkable passage; *In the Tryal of Doctrines that which is first and principally to be considered is, Whether a Doctrine be conformable to the Holy Scripture, &c. The reason of this is, because the Scripture is deliver'd to us as a SUFFICIENT and INFALLIBLE RULE for the Government of the whole Ecclesiastical Body and its Members to the end of the world. So that it is such an Art, such a Rule or Exemplar, that any other Doctrine which is not conformable to it, is to be renounc'd as Heretical, or to be accounted suspicious, or not at all appertaining to Religion. Again,* * *It is evident how pernicious the rejection of the Holy Scripture is, and how certain a preparatory for the reception of Antichrist. Once more,* * *What mischief, what danger, what confusion hath happen'd* * Part. 1. Consid. 2.

* De Distinct. Verar. Visiones à falsis.

* Serm. in die Circumcis. &c.

pen'd through contempt of the Holy Scripture, which ſure is ſufficient for the Government of the Church (elſe Chriſt muſt have been an imperfect Law-giver) let us ask Experience, &c

* Prolog. de Lib. Bib. &c.

Lyra * alſo writes thus * ; *As in Philoſophy truth is diſcovered by reducing things to their firſt and ſelf-evident Principles ; ſo in the Writings deliver'd by the Holy Doctors, Truth is diſcover'd as to matters of Faith, by reducing them to the Canonical Scriptures.*

Sir, *You know how eaſie it were to ſwell up a large Volume, with Teſtimonies to this purpoſe ; eſpecially if I ſhould take the courſe that Mr.* White *does, to hale in quotations though never ſo impertinent ; or uſe the wretched importunity which Mr. S. does, to perſwade them to be pertinent. But theſe Teſtimonies which I have nakedly ſet down, leaving them to ſpeak for themſelves, are enough to ſatisfie an unpaſſionate Reader, ſuch an one as dares truſt himſelf with the uſe of his own* eyes *and* reaſon. *As for that ſort of men which chuſes to follow* noiſe *rather than* light, *we muſt be content to leave them to the blind conduct of thoſe Guides who, having no better means to keep their Followers to them, go* halloing *in the dark, and fill their ears with the inſignificant ſounds of* Infallibility, Indefectibility, Self-evidence *and* Demonſtration.

Concerning

Concerning the Appendix *wherein you are particularly challeng'd, I hope for an Account very ſhortly, and ſo take leave,*

SIR,

Your Affectionate

Friend,

JOHN TILLOTSON.

Lincolns-Inn,
Febr. 20.
1665.

FINIS.

A

REPLY

TO

Mr. *J. S.* his 3d APPENDIX,

Containing some

Animadversions

ON THE

BOOK

ENTITULED

A RATIONAL ACCOUNT of the

Grounds of

Protestant Religion.

By *Ed. Stillingfleet* D. D.

London, Printed for *Henry Mortlock* at the *Phœnix* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1688.

AN APPENDIX TO THE Rule of Faith.

To his honoured Friend Dr. *Tillotſon.*

SIR,

§ 1. AS ſoon as I underſtood your intentions to anſwer Mr. *Serjeant*, I could not but rejoyce on his behalf, as well as on the truths and your own. For I have that real kindneſs for him, that I heartily wiſh him that reaſon and ſcience he pretends to; which I could not but deſpair of his attaining, unleſs he were undeceived in that monſtrous opinion he hath of himſelf and his undertakings. And I knew no perſon more fit than you, to let him underſtand the truth and himſelf together. In which, your performances have been ſo clear and ſatisfactory, that I hope

Mr. *Serjeant*, in ſtead of another Letter of directions to his Anſwerer, will write you one of thanks, for the reaſon and kindneſs you have ſhewed him throughout your Book. Unleſs it fares with you, as it hath done with ſome other *Adverſaries* of theirs, that their civility hath been interpreted as an argument of their uncertainty, and their own confidence cried up for a demonſtration. In which ſenſe onely I ſhall grant our *Proteſtant* Writers to build on uncertainties, and Mr. *White* and Mr. *Serjeant* to be the great *Demonſtrators* of this Age. If their own reaſon had been as *ſevere* as the *cenſures* at *Rome* againſt them, they had ſaved us the labour of any anſwer, and would have found out their own *ſophiſtry* without a confutation. But the leaſt thing we can imagine by their exceſſive confidence, is, that they are deceived themſelves; and therefore it is a part of charity to them, as well as juſtice to the truth, to let the world ſee, that big words are quite another thing from ſcience, and a ſtrong preſumption from a regular demonſtration. As to which, no more need to have been ſaid, than what you have already done, if Mr. *Serjeant* had not thought it an acceſſion to the glory of his atchievements, to lead two Pages of my Book in triumph after him. I confeſs, I was ſomewhat ſurprized to ſee a perſon who would be noted for his valour in aſſaulting *Proteſtant* Writers, ſteal

ſteal ſo behind the main bulk and deſign of my Book; and when he had gotten two ſingle Pages by themſelves, fall upon them with as much pomp and oſtentation, as if he had attack'd the whole. And this muſt be noiſed abroad as an *Anſwer* to me, by the ſame figure that his arguments are called demonſtrations, which is by an *hyperbole* unfit for any, but ſuch *who never flag below the ſphear of Science* in their own judgments, though they ſeem not to come near it in others. Yet ſince Mr. *Serjeant* is not onely pleaſed to concern himſelf ſo far as to anſwer that part of my Book relating to oral tradition; but in moſt expreſs terms to challenge me to reply to him, he may now ſee (aſſoon as I could get any liberty from greater imployments) how ready I am to give him all reaſonable ſatisfaction. And in the firſt place, I return him thanks for the weapon he hath made choice of, *viz.* that of *reaſon*; there being no other I deſire to make uſe of, in managing this debate between us: And I hope he will find as much civility towards him throughout this diſcourſe, as he expreſſes towards me in the entrance to his; if that may be accounted any real civility, which is intended merely out of deſign, with the greater advantage to diſparage the cauſe I have undertaken, and yet ſee no reaſon to repent of. *If in his curſory view of two Chapters of my Book he had* (as he ſaith) P. 236. P. 202.

quite loſt me, he had no cauſe to be troubled for it, if he had found far more excellent perſons, *ſuch as* Dr. *Hammond*, *and the Diſſuader*, *and* Dr. *Pierce*, *inſtead of me*. But to be ſure, he intends not this in honour to any of us, but by way of a common reproach to us all, as though *we did not talk out of nature or things*, *but words and imagination*. I could heartily have wiſhed, Mr. *S.* would have *cropt ſo much of the victory due to anothers learning and induſtry*, as to have ſhewed me one propoſition in thoſe diſcourſes, *which a rational underſtanding*, *that would be true to it ſelf*, *could not ſettle or rely on*. But if ſuch inſinuations as theſe muſt paſs for anſwers, I muſt needs ſay, I judge Mr. *S.* equally happy in confuting our grounds, and in demonſtrating his own; in both which, his greateſt ſtrength lies in the *ſelf-evidence* of his bare affirmations. But it ſeems he is willing to reſign the glory of this *Victory* to the *judicious Authour* of *Labyrinthus Cantuarienſis*, or to ſome others for him; and when they have once obtained it, ſhall not envy them the honour of it. And I ſuppoſe thoſe perſons, whoever they are, may be able by this time, to tell Mr. *S.* it is an eaſier matter to talk of *Victories* than to get them. But if they do no more in the whole, than Mr. *S.* hath done for his ſhare, they will triumph no-where, but where they conquer, *viz.* in their own fancies and imaginations. Therefore

ſore leaving them to their ſilent conqueſts, and as yet, unheard-of Victories, we come to Mr. *S.* who ſo liberally proclaims his own in the point of oral tradition. *Which* (in a phraſe ſcarce heard of in our language before) *is the Poſt*, he tells us, *he hath taken upon him to explicate farther and defend*, What the *explicating a Poſt* means, I as little underſtand, as I do the force of his demonſtrations; but this, and many other ſuch uncouth forms of ſpeech, up and down in his Book (which make his ſtyle ſo ſmooth and eaſie,) are I ſuppoſe intended for embelliſhments of our tongue, and as helps to *ſure-ſpeaking*, as his whole Book is deſigned for *ſure-footing*.

§ 2. But letting him enjoy the pleaſure and felicity of his own expreſſions, I come to conſider the matter in debate between us. And his firſt controverſie with me, is, *for oppoſing the infallibility of oral tradition, to doctrinal infallibility in Pope and Councils.* P. 203. A controverſie fitter to be debated among themſelves, than between him and me: For is any thing more notorious, than that *infallibility* is by the far greateſt part of *Romaniſts* attributed to the preſent *Church*, in teaching and delivering matters of faith, not by virtue of any oral tradition, but the immediate aſſiſtance of the *Holy Ghoſt*; and that this is made by them the onely ground of divine faith? For which Mr. *S.* may if he pleaſe, con-

conſult his *judicious Authour* of *Labyrinthus Cantuarienſis*, or any other of their preſent Writers, except Mr. *White* and *himſelf*. He need not therefore have been to ſeek for the meaning of this doctrinal infallibility, as oppoſed to traditionary, if he had not either been ignorant of the opinion of their own Writers, or notoriouſly diſſembled it. For this infallibility is not attributed to the Rulers of the Church, merely as *Doctours* or *Scholars*, but as the repreſentative *Church*, whoſe office it is, to deliver all matters of faith by way of an infallible teſtimony to every age, and thereby to afford a ſufficient foundation for divine faith. But Mr. *S.* attributes no ſuch infallibility to the repreſentative Church, as teaching the reſt, but derives their infallibility from ſuch grounds as are common to all parts of the eſſential Church. Wherein he apparently oppoſes himſelf to the whole current of their own Authours, who reſolve all faith into the immediate aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; without which, they aſſert, there could be no infallibility at all in tradition, or any thing elſe; and therefore theſe opinions are as oppoſite to each other as may be. For ſuch an infallibility is not attributed by them to the Teachers of the *Church*, merely *on ſome ſignal occaſions*, as Mr. *S.* ſeems to ſuppoſe, when they are to explain new matters of faith; but it is made by them to be as neceſſary

ceſſary as believing it ſelf, becauſe thereby the onely ſure foundation of faith is laid; and therefore it is very evident, they make it proper to the Church in all ages: Or elſe in ſome age of the Church men were deſtitute of ſufficient grounds of faith. For they by no means think it a ſufficient foundation for faith, that one age of the Church could not conſpire to deceive another; for this they will tell him, at moſt, is but a humane faith: but that Chriſt by his promiſe hath aſſured the Church, that there ſhall never be wanting in it the infallible aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, whereby they ſhall infallibly teach and deliver all matters of faith. And if this be not their opinion, let them ſpeak to the contrary, which if they do, I am ſure they muſt retract their moſt elaborate diſcourſes about the reſolution of faith, written by the greateſt Artiſts among them. Let Mr. *S.* then judge, *who it is that ſtumbles at the Threſhold*; but of this difference among them, more afterwards. By this it appears, it was not on any miſtake that I remained unſatisfied in the Queſtion I asked, *Whether am I bound to believe what the preſent Church delivers to be infallible?* To which Mr. *S.* anſwers, *I underſtand him not.* My reply ſhall be onely that of a great *Lawyers* in a like caſe, *I cannot help that.* I am ſure my words are intelligible enough; for I take *infallible* there as he takes it himſelf,

for *infallibly true*; although I deny not the word to be improperly uſed in reference to things; and that for the reaſon given by him, P. 204. *becauſe fallibility and infallibility belong to the knowing power, or the perſons that have it, and not to the object.* But we are often put to the uſe of that word in a ſenſe we acknowledge improper merely in compliance with our Adverſaries, who otherwiſe are apt to charge us with having onely uncertainties and probabilities for our faith; if we do not uſe the term *infallible* as applied to the truth of the thing. I am content therefore wherever, in what I have writ, he meets that term ſo applied, that he take it onely in his own ſenſe, for that which is *certainly true*; for I mean no more by it. And in this ſenſe Mr. *S.* anſwers affirmatively, and gives this acount of it, *not onely becauſe the preſent Church cannot be deceived in what the Church of the former age believed, but becauſe the Church in no age could conſpire againſt her knowledge to deceive that age immediately following in matter of fact, evident in a manner to the whole world.* The Queſtion then is, whether this be a ſufficient account for me to believe that to be certainly true, or to be the doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, which the preſent Church delivers? and conſequently, whether the reſolution of faith be barely into oral tradition?

§ 3. Thus

§ 3. Thus we ſee the clear ſtate of the Queſtion between us. I come therefore to the vindication of thoſe things which I had objected againſt this way of reſolving faith into oral tradition. Three things I eſpecially inſiſted on: 1. That it is inconſiſtent with the pretenſions of the preſent *Roman* Church. 2. That it hath not been the way owned in all ages of the Chriſtian Church. 3. That it is repugnant to common ſenſe and experience, and that the Church of *Rome* hath apparently altered from what was the belief of former ages. If theſe three be made good, there will be no cauſe to *glory* in this laſt invention, to ſupport the ſinking fabrick of that Church. Theſe three then I undertake to defend againſt what Mr. *Serjeant* hath objected againſt them.

1. That it is contrary to the pretenſions of the preſent *Roman* Church. And if it be ſo, there can be no reaſon for thoſe who are of it, to rely upon it. For if ſo be that Church pretends, that the obligation to faith ariſes from a quite different ground from this; how can they who believe that Church infallible, venture their faith upon any other principle than what is publickly owned by her? And whoſoever thinks himſelf bound to believe by virtue of an infallible aſſiſtance of the preſent Church, doth thereby ſhew, that his obligation doth not depend upon what was delivered by the former ages of the

the Church. As thoſe who believed the Apoſtles were infallible in their doctrine, could not reſolve their faith into the infallibility of oral tradition, but into that immediate aſſiſtance by which the Apoſtles ſpake; and where there is a belief of a like aſſiſtance, the foundation of faith cannot lye in the indefectibility of tradition, but in that infallible Spirit which they ſuppoſe the Church to be aſſiſted by. For ſuppoſing this oral tradition ſhould fail, and that men might believe that it had actually failed; yet if the former ſuppoſition were true, there was ſufficient ground for faith remaining ſtill. And what aſſurance can any one have, that the preſent Church delivers nothing for matter of faith, but what hath been derived in every age from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, if ſuch an infallible Spirit be ſuppoſed in the preſent Church which was in the Apoſtles themſelves? For on the ſame reaſon that thoſe who heard the Apoſtles were not bound to trouble themſelves with the tradition of the former age; no more ought they who believe the preſent *Roman* Church to have the ſame infallible aſſiſtance. They need not then enquire, whether this age knew the meaning of the former, or whether one age could conſpire to deceive another, or whether notwithſtanding both theſe, errours might not come into the Church; it is ſufficient for them, that the definitions of the

the preſent Church are infallible in all matters of faith. Therefore my demand was built on very good reaſon; *How can ye aſſure me the preſent Church obliges me to believe nothing but onely what, and ſo far as it received from the former Church?* And Mr. *S*'s anſwer is far from being ſatisfactory, *That this appears by her manifeſt practice, never refuſing communion to any man, that could approve himſelf to believe all the former age did.* For this may be reſolved into a principle far different from this, which is the belief of the infallibility of the preſent Church. For ſuppoſing, that they are not bound to enquire themſelves into the reaſons why the tradition could not fail in any age; it is ſufficient for them to believe the Church infallible; and if it be ſo, in propoſing matters of faith, it muſt be ſo in declaring what the belief of the former age was. But my demands go on, *What evidence can you bring to convince me both that the Church always obſerved this rule, and could never be deceived in it?* Which queſtion is built on theſe two Principles which the infallibility of oral tradition ſtands on: 1. That the Church muſt always go upon this ground. 2. That if it did ſo, it is impoſſible ſhe ſhould be deceived. Both which are ſo far from that *ſelf-evidence* which Mr. *Serjeant* ſtill pretends to in this way, that the *Jeſuits* principles ſeem much more rational and conſiſtent, than

than theſe do. For granting them but that one *Poſtulatum*, that there muſt be an inherent infallibility in the teſtimony of the preſent Church, to afford ſufficient foundation for divine Faith, all the reſt of their doctrine follows naturally from it. Whereas this new way of reſolving faith is built on ſuch ſuppoſitions, which no man well in his wits will be ready to grant. For unleſs it be *ſelf-evident* that the Church did always proceed on this ground, it cannot be *ſelf-evident* that oral tradition is infallible; becauſe the *ſelf-evidence* of this principle depends on this, that in all ages of the Church the onely rule and meaſure of faith, was what was delivered by oral tradition from the age foregoing. Now if it be poſſible, that matters of faith might be conveyed in ways quite different from this, what *ſelf-evidence* can there be, that the Church muſt always proceed upon this? Mr. *S.* then, muſt demonſtrate it impoſſible for matters of faith to be conveyed to poſterity in any other way than oral tradition; and not onely that the thing is impoſſible, but that the Church in all ages judged it to be ſo; or elſe he can never make it at all evident, that the Church always made this her rule of faith. But if either there may be a certain conveyance of the doctrine of faith another way, *viz.* by writing, or that the Church might judge that way more certain, whether it were ſo

or

or not, either way it will appear far enough from *ſelf-evidence*, that ſhe always judged of doctrines of faith, merely by the tradition of the preceding age. If another way be granted poſſible, there muſt be clear demonſtration, that the Church notwithſtanding this, did never make uſe of it; for if it did make uſe of another way of reſolving faith in any age of the Church, then in that age of the Church oral tradition was not looked on as the ground of faith; and if ſo, notwithſtanding whatever Mr. *S.* can demonſtrate to the contrary, that age might have believed otherwiſe than the immediately preceding did. For let us but ſuppoſe, that all neceſſary doctrines of faith were betimes recorded in the Church, in Books univerſally received by the Chriſtians of the firſt ages; is it not poſſible, that age which firſt embraced theſe Books, might deliver them to poſterity as the rule of their faith, and ſo down from one age to another; and doth it not hence follow, that the rule of faith is quite different from a mere oral tradition? Let Mr. *S.* then either ſhew it impoſſible, that the doctrines of faith ſhould be written; or that being written, they ſhould be univerſally received; or that being univerſally received in one age, they ſhould not be delivered to the next; or being delivered to the next, thoſe Books ſhould not be looked on as containing the rule of faith in them; or though they were ſo, yet,

that ſtill oral tradition was wholly relied on as the Rule of Faith; and then I ſhall freely grant that Mr. *S.* hath attempted ſomething towards the proof of this new *hypotheſis*. But as things now ſtand, it is ſo far from being *ſelf-evident*, that the Church hath always gone upon this principle, that we find it looked on as a great novelty among them in their own Church; and it would be a rare thing, for a new invention to have been the ſenſe of the Church in all Ages; which if it hath been, the ſtrength of it is thereby taken away.

§ 4. But let us ſuppoſe that the Church did proceed upon this principle, *that nothing was to be embraced, but what was derived by Tradition from the Apoſtles*; how doth it thence follow, that nothing could be admitted into the Church but what was really ſo derived from them? Do we not ſee in the world at this day, that among thoſe who own this principle, contradictory propoſitions are believed; and both ſides tell us, it is on this account, becauſe their doctrine was delivered by the *Apoſtles*? doth not the *Greek Church* profeſs to believe on the account of Tradition from the *Apoſtles* as well as the *Latin*? If that Tradition failed in the *Greek Church*, which was preſerved in the *Latin*, either Mr. *S.* muſt inſtance on his own principles in that Age which conſpired to deceive the next, or he muſt acknowledge, that while men own Tradition they may be deceived in what the fore-

foregoing Age taught them; and conſequently thoſe things may be admitted as doctrines coming from the *Apoſtles* which were not ſo, and ſome which did may be loſt, and yet the pretence of Tradition remain ſtill. What *ſelf-evidence* then can there be in this principle, when two parts of the Church may both own it, and yet believe contradictions on the account of it? It is then worth our enquiring, what *ſelf-evidence* this is which Mr. *S.* ſpeaks ſo much of, which is neither more nor leſs, *but that men in all Ages had Eyes, Ears, and other Senſes, alſo common reaſon, and as much memory as to remember their own names and frequently inculcated actions.* Which is ſo very reaſonable a *poſtulatum*, that I ſuppoſe none who enjoy any of theſe will deny it. Let us therefore ſee how he proceeds upon it. *If you diſprove this, I doubt we have loſt mankind, the ſubject we ſpeak of; and till you diſprove it, neither I, nor any man in his wits can doubt, that this rule depending on teſtifying, that is, ſenſe or experience, can poſſibly permit men to be deceivable.* Big words indeed; but ſuch as evidence that all men who are in their wits do not conſtantly uſe them. For I pray, Sir, what doth Mr. *S.* think of the *Greek Church*? Had not thoſe in it Eyes, Ears, and other Senſes, as well as in the *Latin*? Do not they pretend and appeal to what they received from their *Fore-fathers* as well as the *Latins*? It ſeems then a de- P. 205.

ception is poſſible in the caſe of teſtifying, and therefore this doth more *than permit men to be deceivable*; for there hath been an actual deception on one ſide or other. But we need not fear *loſing mankind in this*; for the poſſibility of error ſuppoſeth mankind to continue ſtill; and if we take away that, we may ſooner loſe it than by the contrary. But what repugnancy can we imagine to humane nature, that men ſuppoſing doctrines of faith to come down from *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*, ſhould yet miſtake in judging what thoſe doctrines are? Had not men Eyes, and Ears, and common Senſe in *Chriſt* and the *Apoſtles* times? And yet we ſee even then the doctrine of *Chriſt* was miſtaken; and is it ſuch a wonder it ſhould be in ſucceeding Ages? Did not the *Nazarenes* miſtake in point of Circumciſion, the *Corinthians* as to the Reſurrection, and yet the mean time agree in this, that *Chriſt*'s doctrine was the rule of faith, or that they ought to believe nothing but what came from him? Did not the Diſciples themſelves err, even while they were with Chriſt, *and certainly had Eyes, and Ears, and common Senſe as other men have*, concerning ſome great Articles of Chriſtian Faith, *viz. Chriſt's Paſſion, Reſurrection*, and the *nature of his Kingdom*? If then ſuch who had the greateſt opportunities imaginable, and the higheſt apprehenſions of *Chriſt*, might ſo eaſily miſtake in points of

ſuch

ſuch moment, what ground have we to believe, that ſucceeding Ages ſhould not be liable to ſuch miſapprehenſions? And it was not merely the want of clear Divine Revelation which was the cauſe of their miſtakes; for theſe things were plain enough to perſons not poſſeſſed with Prejudices; but thoſe were ſo ſtrong as to make them apprehend things quite another way than they ought to do. So it was then, and ſo it was in ſucceeding Ages; for let Parents teach what they pleaſed for matters of Faith, yet prejudice and liableneſs to miſtake in Children, might eaſily make them miſapprehend either the nature or weight of the doctrines delivered to them. So that ſetting aſide a certain way of Recording the matters of Faith in the Books of *Scripture*, and theſe preſerved entire in every Age, it is an eaſie matter to conceive, how in a ſhort time *Chriſtian Religion* would have been corrupted as much as ever any was in the world. For when we conſider how much notwithſtanding *Scripture*, the Pride, Paſſion, and Intereſts of men have endeavoured to deface *Chriſtian Religion* in the world, what would not theſe have done, if there had been no ſuch certain rule to judge of it by? Mr. *S.* imagins himſelf *in repub. Platonis*, but it appears he is ſtill *in fæce Romuli*; he fanſies there never were, nor could be any differences among *Chriſtians*, and that all *Chriſtians* made it their whole buſineſs to teach their

poſterity matters of Faith, and that they minded nothing in the world but the imprinting that on their minds that they might have it ready for their Children; and that all Parents had equal skill and fidelity in delivering matters of *Religion* to their poſterity. Whereas in truth, we find in the early Ages of the *Chriſtian Church* ſeveral differences about matters of Faith, and theſe differences continued to poſterity, but all parties ſtill pleading that their doctrine came from the *Apoſtles*; and it fell out unhappily for Mr. *S.* that thoſe were commonly moſt groſly deceived who pretended the moſt to Oral Tradition from the *Apoſtles*; ſtill we find the grand debate was, what came from the *Apoſtles*, and what not? whereas had Tradition been ſo infallible a way of conveying, how could this ever have come into debate among them? What, did not they know what their Parents taught them? It ſeems they did not, or their Parents were no more agreed than themſelves; for their differences could never be ended this way. Afterwards came in for many Ages ſuch a ſucceſſion of Ignorance and Barbariſm, that *Chriſtian Religion* was little minded either by Parents or *Children*, as it ought to have been; inſtead of that, ſome fopperies and ſuperſtitions were hugely in requeſt, and the men who fomented theſe things were cried up as great *Saints* and workers of Miracles. So that the

Miracles

Miracles of S. *Francis* and S. *Dominick* were as much, if not more carefully conveyed from Parents to Children in that Age, than thoſe of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*; and on this account poſterity muſt be equally bound to believe them, and have their perſons in equal veneration. If men at laſt were grown wiſer, it was becauſe they did not believe Mr. *S*'s principles, that they ought to receive what was delivered by their Parents; but they began to ſearch and enquire into the writings of former Ages, and to examine the opinions and practices of the preſent, with thoſe of the primitive Church, and by this means there came a reſtauration of *Learning* and *Religion* together.

§ 5. But though matters of fact be plain and evident in this caſe, yet Mr. *S.* will prove it impoſſible there ſhould any Errors come into the *Chriſtian Church*; and his main argument is this, *becauſe no Age of the Church could conſpire againſt her knowledge to deceive that Age immediately following, in matter of fact, evident in a manner to the whole world.* But before I come, more particularly, to ſhew the weakneſs of this argument, by manifeſting how Errors might come into the Church without ſuch a Conſpiracy as this is, I ſhall propound ſome *Queries* to him. 1. What Age of the *Church* he will inſtance in, wherein all perſons who were not caſt out of the *Church*, had the ſame apprehenſions concern-

ing all points of Faith *i. e.* that none among them did believe more things delivered by Chriſt or the *Apoſtles* than others did. I am ſure he can neither inſtance in the Age of the *Apoſtles* themſelves, nor in thoſe immediately ſucceeding them; unleſs Mr. *S.* the better to defend his *hypotheſis*, will queſtion all written Records, becauſe they conſiſt of *dead letters*, and *unſens'd characters*, and *wordiſh teſtimonies*. Never conſidering, that while he utters this, he writes himſelf; unleſs he imagins there is more of *Life*, *Senſe*, and *Certainty* in his *Books*, than in the *Scriptures* or any other writing whatſoever. 2. Where there were different apprehenſions in one Age of the Church, whether there muſt not be different Traditions in the next? For as he looks on all Parents as bound to teach their Children, ſo on Children as bound to believe what their Parents teach them. On which ſuppoſition different Traditions in the ſucceeding Age muſt needs follow, different apprehenſions in the precedent. 3. Whether perſons agreeing in the ſubſtance of doctrines may not differ in their apprehenſions of the neceſſity of them? As for inſtance, all may agree in the Article of Chriſt's deſcent into Hell, but yet may differ in the explication of it, and in the apprehenſion of the neceſſity of it in order to ſalvation. So that we muſt not only in Tradition about matters of Faith enquire, what was delivered, but under

der what notion it was delivered; whether as an allowable opinion, or a neceſſary point of Faith. But if ſeveral perſons, nay multitudes in the Church may have different notions as to the neceſſity of the ſame points, by what means ſhall we diſcern what was delivered as an opinion in the Church, and what as an Article of Faith? But Mr. *S.* throughout his diſcourſe takes it for granted, that there is the ſame neceſſity of believing and delivering all things which concern the Chriſtian doctrine; and ſtill ſuppoſes the ſame *ſacredneſs, concern, neceſſity,* in delivering all the points in controverſie between the *Romaniſts* and Us, as there was in thoſe main Articles of Faith, which they and we are agreed in. Which is ſo extravagant a ſuppoſition, that it is hard to conceive it ſhould ever enter into the head of a perſon pretending to reaſon; but as extravagant as it is, it is that without which his whole Fabrick falls to the ground. For ſuppoſe we ſhould grant him, that the infinite concerns which depend on the belief of the *Chriſtian doctrine* ſhould be of ſo prevalent nature with the world, that it is impoſſible to conceive any one Age ſhould neglect the knowing them, or conſpire to deceive the next Age about them; yet what is all this to the matters in difference between us? Will Mr. *S.* prove the ſame *ſacredneſs, neceſſity, concern, and miraculouſly atteſtedneſs* (as he phraſes it) in the

Invocation

Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, Tranſubſtantiation, Supremacy, &c. as in the believing the Death and Reſurrection of the Son of God? If he doth not prove this, he doeth nothing; for his arguments may hold for doctrines judged univerſally neceſſary, but for no other. Therefore Mr. *S.* hath a new task which he thought not of; which is, to manifeſt that theſe could not be looked on as *Opinions*, but were embraced as *neceſſary Articles of Faith.* For unleſs he proves them ſuch, he can neither prove any obligation in Parents to teach them their *Children*, nor in *Children* to believe what their *Parents* taught, but only to hold them in the ſame degree which they did themſelves. When Mr. *S.* will undertake to prove, that the whole *Church*, from the time of Chriſt, did agree in the points in difference between us, as neceſſary Articles of Faith, I may more eaſily believe, that no Age could be ignorant of them, or offer to deceive the next about them. But when Mr. *S.* reflects on his frequent conceſſion, that there are *private Opinions* in the *Church*, diſtinct from *matters of Faith*, he muſt remember, before he can bring home his grounds to the caſe between their *Church* and ours, that he muſt prove none of the things in debate, were ever entertained as *private Opinions*, and that it is impoſſible for that which was a *private Opinion* in one Age, to become a *matter* of *Faith* in the next. § 6.

§ 6. But becauſe this diſtinction of his ruins his whole demonſtration, I ſhall firſt propound it in his own terms, and then ſhew how from thence it follows, that Errors may come into the *Church*, and be entertained as matters of Faith. His words are, *It being evident, that we have but two ways of ordinary knowledge, by acts of our Soul, or operations on our Body, that is, by reaſon and experience; the former of which belongs to Speculators or Doctors, the ſecond to Deliverers of what was received, or Teſtifiers.* And this diſtinction he frequently admits, not only in the preſent Age of the Church, but in any; for the ſame reaſon will hold in all. From hence I propoſe ſeveral *Queries* farther to Mr. *S.* 1. If every one in the *Church* looked on himſelf as bound to believe juſt as the precedent Age did, whence came any to have *particular Opinions* of their own? For either the *Church* had delivered her ſenſe in that caſe or not; if not, then Tradition is no certain conveyer of the *doctrine* of *Chriſt*; if ſhe had, then thoſe who vented private ſpeculations were *Hereticks* in ſo doing; becauſe they oppoſed that doctrine which the *Church* received from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*. If Mr. *S.* replies, *that private ſpeculations are inſuch caſes where there is no matter of Faith at all*, he can never be able to help himſelf by that diſtinction in the caſe of his own *Church*; for I demand, whether is it a *matter*

ter of *Faith*, that men ought to believe Oral Tradition infallible? If not, how can men ground their Faith upon it? If it be, then either ſome are mere *ſpeculators* in matters of Faith; or all who believe on the account of the *Popes infallibility* are *Hereticks* for ſo doing. 2. If there were *ſpeculators* in former Ages as well as this, whether did thoſe men believe their own *ſpeculations* or no? If not, then the *Fathers* were great *Impoſtors*, who vented thoſe *ſpeculations* in the *Church* which they did not believe themſelves. And it is plain, Mr. *S.* ſpeaks of ſuch Opinions which the aſſerters of, do firmly believe to be true: And if they did, then they look on themſelves as bound to believe ſomething which was not founded on the Tradition of the *Church*; and conſequently, did not own *Oral Tradition*, as the *Rule* of *Faith*. So that as many *ſpeculators* as we find in the *Church*, ſo many *teſtifiers* we have againſt the *infallibility* of *Oral Tradition*. 3. Whether thoſe perſons who did themſelves believe thoſe Opinions to be true, did not think themſelves obliged to tell others they ought to believe them; and conſequently, to deliver theſe as matters of Faith to their Children? Let Mr. *S.* ſhew me any inconſequence in this; but that it unavoidably follows upon his principles, that they were bound to teach their Children what themſelves received as the doctrine of Chriſt; and that the obligation is in all reſpects equal as if they had believed

theſe

theſe things on the account of *Oral Tradition.* 4. If Children be obliged to believe what their Parents teach them for matters of Faith, then upon Mr. *S*'s own conceſſions, is not poſterity bound to believe ſomething which originally came not from *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*? For it appears in this caſe, that the firſt riſe was from a private Opinion of ſome *Doctors* of the *Church*; but they believing theſe Opinions themſelves, think themſelves obliged to propagate them to others; and by reaſon of their Learning and Authority, theſe Opinions may by degrees gain a general acceptance in the ruling part of the *Church*; and all who believe them true, think they ought to teach them their *Children*; and Children they are to believe what their Parents teach them. Thus from Mr. *S*'s *own principles*, things that never were delivered by *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*, may come to be received as matters of Faith in the preſent *Church.* Thus the intelligent Reader needs no bodies help but Mr. *S.* to let him underſtand how *Invocation of Saints*, *Purgatory*, *Tranſubſtantiation*, *&c.* though never delivered either by *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*, may yet now be looked on as Articles of *Faith*, and yet no Age of the *Church* conſpire to deceive another. Either then Mr. *S.* muſt ſay, there never were any *private Opinators* or *Speculators* in the *Church*, as diſtinct from *teſtifiers*, and then he unavoidably contradicts himſelf; or he muſt deny that poſterity is bound

bound to believe what their fore-fathers delivered them as matters of Faith; which deſtroys the force of his whole demonſtration. Perhaps he will anſwer, *that Children are not bound to believe what barely their Parents, or any other number of perſons might deliver as matters of Faith, but what the whole Church of every Age delivers.* This, though the only thing to be ſaid in the caſe, yet is moſt unreaſonable, becauſe it runs men upon inextricable difficulties in the way of their reſolving Faith. For ſuppoſe any Children taught by their Parents what they are to believe; Mr. *S.* muſt ſay, they are not bound to believe them preſently, but to enquire whether they agree with the whole *Church* of that *Age* firſt, before they can be obliged to aſſent. Which being an impoſſible task either for Children, or men of Age, to find out in the way of Oral Tradition, this way of reſolving Faith, doth but offer a fairer pretence for infidelity. For we ſee, how impoſſible it is for Mr. *S.* to make it appear, that their *Church* is agreed about the Rule of Faith; for by his own confeſſion, the far greater number as *Speculators* oppoſe the way aſſerted by him; how much more difficult then muſt it needs be, to find out what the ſenſe of the whole *eſſential Church* is in all matters which Parents may teach their Children for doctrines of Faith? So that if Children are not bound to believe what their Parents teach them, till they

they know they teach nothing but what the whole *Church* teaches, it is the moſt compendious way to teach them they are not bound to believe at all. But if this diſtinction be admitted, as Mr. *S.* makes much uſe of it, then it appears, how errors may come into the Church at firſt under the notion of *ſpeculations*, and by degrees to be delivered as points of *faith*, by which means thoſe things may be received in the *Church*, for ſuch, which were never delivered by *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*, and yet no age conſpire to deceive the next, which was the thing to be ſhewed.

§ 7. This is one way of ſhewing how *errors* may come into the *Church*, without one ages conſpiring to deceive the next; but beſides this, there are ſeveral others I might inſiſt upon; but I ſhall mention onely two more: 1. Miſinterpreting the ſenſe of *Scripture*. 2. Suppoſing it in the power of ſome part of the *Church* to oblige the whole in matters of faith. For the *firſt* we are to conſider, that no imaginable account can be *given* either of the writing or univerſal reception of the *Books* of the *New Teſtament*, if they were not deſigned for the preſervation of the doctrine of *Chriſt*. And although it ſhould be granted poſſible for the main and fundamental articles of Chriſtian faith (ſuch as the *Apoſtles Creed* gives a ſummary account of) to have been preſerved by the help

help of tradition; yet, unleſs we be extremely ungratefull, we cannot but acknowledge, that *God* hath infinitely better provided for us, in not leaving the grounds of our *Religion* to the mere *breath* of the people, or the care of Mothers inſtructing their *Children* but hath given us the certain records of all the doctrines and motives of faith, preſerved inviolably from the firſt ages of the *Church*. And when the *Church* ſaw with what care *God* had provided for the means of faith, *oral tradition* was little minded; thence the memory of thoſe other things not recorded in *Scripture* is wholly loſt; all the care was imployed in ſearching, preſerving, and delivering theſe *ſacred Books* to poſterity. To theſe the primitive *Church* ſtill appeals; theſe they plead for againſt all adverſaries, defending their authority, explaining their ſenſe, vindicating them from all corruptions. Tradition they rely not on, any farther than as a teſtimony of the truth of theſe records, or to clear the ſenſe of them from the perverſe interpretation of thoſe *Hereticks* who pretended another kind of tradition than what was in *Scripture*. And when theſe were ſilenced, all the diſputes that aroſe in the *Church* concerning matters of faith, were about the ſenſe of theſe Books; as is evident by the proceedings in the caſe of *Arius* and *Pelagius*. Wherein tradition was onely uſed as a means to clear the ſenſe of the *Scriptures*, but

but not at all as that which the faith of all was to be reſolved into. But when any thing was pleaded from tradition, for which there was no ground in *Scripture*, it was rejected with the ſame eaſe it was offered; and ſuch perſons were plainly told, this was not the *Churches* way; if they had plain Scripture with the concurrent ſenſe of *Antiquity*, they might produce it, and rely upon it. So that the whole uſe of *tradition* in the primitive *Church* (beſides atteſting the Books) was, to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of impoſing ſenſes on *Scripture*, againſt the univerſal ſenſe of the *Church* from the *Apoſtles* times. But as long as men were men, it was not avoidable, but they muſt fall into different apprehenſions of the meaning of the *Scripture*, according to their different judgments, prejudices, learning and education. And ſince they had all this apprehenſion, that the *Scripture* contained all doctrines of faith, thence as men judged of the ſenſe of it, they differed in their apprehenſion, concerning matters of faith. And thence errours and miſtakes might eaſily come into the *Church*, without one age conſpiring to deceive the next. Nay, if it be poſſible for men to rely on tradition without *Scripture*, this may eaſily be done; for by that means they make a new rule of faith, not known to the primitive *Church*, and conſequently, that very aſſertion is an errour in which the former age did not con-

ſpire to deceive the next. And if theſe things be poſſible, Mr. *S*'s demonſtration fails him; for hereby a reaſonable account is given, how errours may come into a *Church* without one age conſpiring to deceive another. Again, let me enquire of Mr. *S.* whether men may not believe it in the power of the ruling part of the *Church*, to oblige the whole to an aſſent to the definitions of it? To ſpeak plainer, is it not poſſible for men to believe the *Pope* and *Council infallible* in their *decrees*? And I hope the *Jeſuits* (as little as Mr. *S.* loves them, or they him) may be a ſufficient evidence of more than the bare poſſibility of this. If they may believe this, doth it not neceſſarily follow, that they are bound to believe whatever they declare to be matter of faith? Suppoſing then, that *Tranſubſtantiation*, *Supremacy*, *Invocation* of *Saints* were but *private opinions* before, but are now defined by *Pope* and *Council*, theſe men cannot but look on themſelves as much obliged to believe them, as if they had been delivered as matters of faith, in every age ſince the *Apoſtles* times. Is it now repugnant to common ſenſe that this opinion ſhould be believed or entertained in the *Church*? if not, why may not this opinion be generally received? if it be ſo, doth it not unavoidably follow, that the faith of men muſt alter according to the *Churches* definitions? And thus *private opinions* may be believed as *articles* of

faith

faith, and *corrupt practices* be eſtabliſhed as *laudable pieces of devotion*, and yet no one age of the *Church* conſpire to deceive another. Thus I hope Mr. *S.* may ſee how far it is from being a *ſelf-evident principle, that no errour can come into the Church, unleſs one age conſpire to deceive the next in a matter of fact, evident in a manner to the whole world.* Which is ſo wild an apprehenſion, that I believe the *Jeſuits* cannot entertain themſelves without ſmiles, to ſee their *domeſtick adverſaries* expoſe themſelves to contempt with ſo much confidence.

§ 8. Thus I come to the reaſon I gave, why there is no reaſon to believe that this is the preſent ſenſe of the *Roman Church*. My words are, *For I ſee the Roman Church aſſerts, that things may be* de fide *in one age, which were not in another; at leaſt Popes and Councils challenge this; and this is the common doctrine maintained there, and others are looked on as no members of their Church who aſſert the contrary; but as perſons at leaſt meritoriouſly, if not actually excommunicate. Where then ſhall I ſatisfie my ſelf, what the ſenſe of your Church is, as to this particular? Muſt I believe a very few perſons, whom the reſt diſown as heretical and ſeditious? or ought I not rather to take the judgment of the greateſt and moſt approved perſons of that Church? And theſe diſown any ſuch doctrine; but aſſert that the Church may determine things* de fide,

which were not before. In anſwer to this
P. 205. Mr. *S. begs leave to diſtinguiſh the words* de fide, *which may either mean Chriſtian faith, or points of faith taught by Chriſt; and then he grants, 'tis nonſenſe to ſay, they can be in one age, and not in another. Or* de fide *may mean obligatory to be believed. In this latter ſenſe none I think* (faith he) *denies things to be* de fide *in one age and not in another; in the former ſenſe none hold it.* Upon which very triumphantly he concludes, *What's now become of your difficulty? I believe you are in ſome wonderment, and think I elude it rather than anſwer it; I ſhall endeavour to unperplex you.* I muſt confeſs it a fault of humane nature, to admire things which men underſtand not; on which account I cannot free my ſelf from ſome temptation to that he calls *wonderment*; but I am preſently cured of it, when I endeavour to reduce his diſtinction to reaſon. For inſtead of explaining his terms, he ſhould have ſhewed how any thing can be obligatory to be believed in any age of the *Church*, which was no point of faith taught by *Chriſt*, which notwithſtanding his endeavour to *unperplex me*, is a thing as yet I apprehend not; becauſe I underſtand no obligation to faith to ariſe from any thing but *divine revelation*; and I do not yet believe any thing in *Chriſtian doctrine* to be divinely revealed, but what was delivered by *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*. And my

my *wonderment* muſt needs be the greater; becauſe I ſuppoſe this inconſiſtent with Mr. *S*'s principles. For oral tradition doth neceſſarily imply, that all points of *faith* were firſt taught by *Chriſt*, and conveyed by tradition to us; but if a thing may be *de fide* in this latter ſenſe, which was not before, what becomes of reſolving faith wholly into *oral tradition*? For *faith* is *reſolved* into that from whence the *obligation* to *believe* comes; but here Mr. *S*. confeſſes, that the obligation to believe doth ariſe from ſomething quite different from *oral tradition*; and therefore faith muſt be reſolved into it. Beſides, all the ſenſe I can find in that diſtinction, is, that men are bound to believe ſomething in one age, which they were not in another; and if ſo, I ſhall deſire Mr. *S*. to *unperplex me* in this, how every age is bound to believe juſt as the precedent did, and yet one age be bound to believe more than the precedent. But however, I am much obliged to him for his endeavour to *unperplex me*, as he ſpeaks; for really I look on no civilities to be greater than thoſe which are deſigned for clearing our underſtandings; ſo great an adorer am I of true reaſon and an intelligible Religion. And therefore I perfectly agree with him in his ſaying, *that Chriſtianity aims not to make us beaſts, but more perfectly men; and the perfection of our manhood conſiſts in the uſe of our reaſons*. From whence P. 205.

he infers, that it is reaſonable, conſequences ſhould be drawn from principles of faith, *which*, he ſaith, *are of two ſorts; firſt ſuch as need no more but common ſenſe to deduce them; the others are ſuch as need the maxims of ſome ſcience got by ſpeculation to infer them; and theſe are Theological concluſions: The former ſort*, he tells us, *the Church is neceſſitated to make uſe of upon occaſion*, i. e. *when any Heretick queſtions thoſe, and eadem opera, the whole point of faith it ſelf, of which they were a part; as in the caſe of the* Monothelites, *about Chriſt's having two wills.* But all this while, I am far enough from being *unperplexed*; nay by this diſcourſe, I ſee every one who offers to *unperplex* another, is not very *clear* himſelf. For ſince he makes no *Theological concluſions* to be *de fide*, but onely ſuch *conſequences as common ſenſe draws*, I would willingly underſtand how *common ſenſe* receives a new obligation to faith. For to my apprehenſion the deducing of conſequences from principles by *common ſenſe*, is not an act of believing, but of knowledge conſequent upon a principle of faith. And the meaning is no more than this, that men, when they ſay they believe things, ſhould not contradict themſelves, as certainly they would do, if they deny thoſe *conſequences* which *common ſenſe* draws from them. As in the caſe of the *Monothelites*, for men to aſſert that

Chriſt

Chriſt had *two natures*, and yet not *two wills*; when the *will* is nothing elſe but the inclination of the *nature* to that *good* which belongs to it. So that there can be no diſtinct obligation to believe ſuch *conſequences* as are drawn by common ſenſe; but every one that believes the *principles* from whence they are drawn, is thereby bound to believe all the conſequences which immediately follow from them. Indeed the *Church*, when people will be ſo unreaſonable to deny ſuch things, may explain her ſenſe of the article of faith in thoſe terms which may beſt prevent diſpute; but this is onely to diſcriminate the perſons who truely believe this article, from ſuch as do not. Not that any new obligation to faith reſults from this act of the *Church*; but the better to prevent cavils, ſhe explains her ſenſe of the article it ſelf in more explicite terms. *Which*, as he ſaith, *is onely to put the faith out of danger of being equivocated.* Which is quite another thing from cauſing a new obligation to believe. As ſuppoſe the *Church*, to prevent the growth of the *Socinian doctrine*, ſhould require from men the declaring their belief of the *eternal exiſtence* of the *Son* of *God*; Would this be to bind men to believe ſome thing which they were not bound to before? No, but onely to expreſs their aſſent to the *Deity* of Chriſt in the ſimpleſt terms; becauſe otherwiſe they might call

him *God* by *office*, and not by *nature*. Now how can any one conceive, that any ſhould be firſt obliged to believe, that *Chriſt* is *God*, and yet receive a new obligation afterwards to believe his *eternal exiſtence*? Thus it is in all *immediate conſequences* drawn by *common ſenſe*; in all which, the primary obligation to believe the thing it ſelf, extends to the belief of it in the moſt clear and leaſt controverted terms, which are not intended to impoſe on mens faith, but to promote the *Churches* peace. For neither is there a new object of faith; for how can that be, which common ſenſe draws from what is believed already? neither is there any *infallible proponent*, unleſs *common ſenſe* hath uſurped the *Popes* prerogative. But Mr. *S.* offers at a reaſon for this, which is, *that none can have an obligation to believe what they have not an obligation to think of; and in ſome age the generality of the faithfull have no occaſion, nor conſequently obligation to mind, reflect, or think on thoſe propoſitions involved in the main ſtock of faith. From whence*, he ſaith, *it follows, that a thing may be* de fide, *or obligatory to be believed in one age, and not in another.* But let Mr. *S.* ſhew, how a man can be obliged to believe any thing as an article of faith, who is not bound to think of all the immediate conſequences of it? Becauſe faith is an act of a reaſonable nature, which ought to enquire into the reaſons and

and conſequences of things which it doth believe. But Mr. *S*'s miſtake lies here, in not diſtinguiſhing the obligation to believe from the obligation to an explicite declaration of that aſſent. The former comes onely from God, and no new obligation can ariſe from any act of the *Church*; but the latter being a thing tending to the *Churches* peace, may be required by it on ſome occaſions; *i. e.* when the doctrine is aſſaulted by *Hereticks*, as in the time of the *four firſt General Councils*; but ſtill a man is not at all the more obliged to aſſent, but to expreſs his aſſent in order to the *Churches* ſatisfaction.

§ 9. But Mr. *S.* ſuppoſes me to enquire, *how the Church can have power to oblige the generality to belief of ſuch a point.* To which his anſwer is, *ſhe obliges them to believe the main point of faith, by virtue of traditions, being a ſelf-evident rule, and theſe implied points by virtue of their being ſelf-evidently connected with thoſe main and perpetually uſed points, ſo that the vulgar can be rationally and connaturally made capable of this their obligation.* But we are not now enquiring, what the obligation to believe the main points of faith is, nor whether tradition be a *ſelf-evident rule*; but how there ſhould be *a new obligation to believe ſomething ſelf-evidently connected with the former points*, is beyond my capacity to underſtand. And they muſt be *vulgar underſtandings* indeed, that P. 208.

that can *rationally and connaturally* be made capable of ſuch an obligation. For if it be ſelf evidently connected with the main points, no one can believe the one, without believing the other; for nothing is *ſelf evident*, but what a man aſſents to at the firſt apprehenſion of it; and if he doth ſo, how comes there a new obligation to believe it? Is it poſſible to believe, that any thing conſiſts of *parts*, and not believe that *that whole is greater than any of thoſe parts*? for this is a thing *ſelf-evidently connected* with the nature of the *whole*. But theſe are *ſelf-evident riddles*, as the former were *unintelligible demonſtrations*. And yet, though theſe be rare *Theories*, the application of them to the caſe of the *Roman Church* exceeds all the reſt. *Whence*, ſaith he, *the Government of our Church is ſtill juſtified to be ſweet, and according to right nature, and yet forcible and efficacious*. Although I admire many things in Mr. *S*'s Book, yet I cannot ſay I do any thing more than this paſſage, that *becauſe men are obliged to believe no implied point, but ſuch as are ſelf-evidently connected with the main ones*, therefore *the Government of the Roman Church is ſweet, and according to right nature*, &c. Alas then, how much have we been miſtaken all this while, that have charged her with impoſing hard and unſufferable conditions of communion with her! No, ſhe is

ſo gentle and ſweet, that ſhe requires nothing *but the main points on the account of a ſelf-evident rule, and implied points by reaſon of ſelf evident connexion with the former.* I ſee Mr. *S.* (if he will make good his word) is the onely perſon who is ever like to reconcile me with the *Church* of *Rome*: For I aſſure you, I never deſire any better terms of communion with a *Church*, than to have no main points of faith required from me to aſſent to, but what are built on a *ſelf-evident rule*, nor any implied points but ſuch as are *ſelf evidently connected* with the former. And no work can be more eaſie, than to convince me upon theſe grounds; for all endeavours of proof are taken away by the things being ſaid to be *ſelf-evident*. For the very offer of proof that they are ſo, *ſelf-evidently* proves they are not ſo: For what ever is proved by ſome thing beſide it ſelf, can never be ſaid without a contradiction to be *ſelf-evident*. But not to tye up Mr. *S.* from his excellent faculty of proving, if Mr. *S.* will prove to me that any of the points in difference between us, as *Tranſubſtantiation*, *Purgatory*, *Supremacy* of the *Roman Church*, &c. have any *ſelf-evident connexion* with any main point of faith in the *Apoſtles Creed*, I ſolemnly promiſe him to retract all I have writ againſt that *Church*; ſo far ſhall I be from needing a new obligation to believe them. But if theſe be ſo remote

remote from *ſelf-evidence*, that they are plainly repugnant to ſenſe and reaſon (witneſs that ſelf-evident doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation) what then muſt we think of Mr. *S.*? Surely the leaſt is, that ſince his being a *Roman Catholick*, his mind is ſtrangely inlightned, ſo far that thoſe things are *ſelf-evident* to him, which are contradictions to the reſt of the world. But withall Mr. *S.* acquaints us with another Myſtery; which is, *how theſe points deſcended by a kind of Tradition*, and yet confeſſes, *they were never thought of or reflected on by the generality, till the Church took occaſion to explain them.* Such a *ſilent Tradition* doth very ſuitably follow the former *ſelf-evident connexion.* For he that can believe *Tranſubſtantiation* to be *ſelf-evident*, no wonder if he believes that to have been delivered by a *conſtant Tradition*, which was never heard of from the *Apoſtles times* to *theſe.*

Now Mr. *S.* is pleaſed to return to me, and draws up a freſh charge againſt me, which is, *that I act like a Politician, and would conquer them by firſt dividing them, and making odious compariſons between two parties of Divines. But to ſhew us how little they differ, he diſtinguiſhes them, as faithfull, and as private diſcourſers; in the former notion,* he ſaith, *they all hold the ſame divinely conſtituted Church-Government, and the ſame ſelf-evident Rule of Faith; but as private diſcourſers he acknow-*

acknowledges they differ in the explication of their belief. I meddle not here with the *Government* of their *Church*, (which I have elſewhere proved to be far enough from being *divinely conſtituted*) but with the *Rule of Faith*; and the queſtion is, whether the *infallibility* of *Oral Tradition*, be that *ſelf-evident Rule* which that *Church* proceeds on; *Yes*, ſaith Mr. *S. they are all as faithfull agreed in it, but as diſcourſes they differ* about it. Which in ſhort is, that all in the *Church* of *Rome*, who are not of his Opinion, know not what they ſay; and that they oppoſe that which they do really believe. Which in plain *Engliſh* is, that they are egregious diſſemblers and prevaricators in *Religion*, that they do intolerably flatter the *Pope* and *preſent Church* with loud declamations for their infallibility, but they do really believe no ſuch thing, but reſolve all into Oral Tradition. But is not this an excellent agreement among them, when Mr. *White* and his party not only diſown the common doctrine of the infallibility of *Pope* and *Councils*, but diſpute againſt it as pernicious and deſtructive to *Chriſtian Faith*? on the other ſide the far greater part of *Romaniſts* ſay, there can be no certainty of Faith, unleſs there be an *infallible* Divine Teſtimony in the *preſent Church*, and this lodged in *Pope* and *Councils*; that thoſe who endeavour to overthrow this, are *Dangerous*, *Seditious*, *Heretical* perſons. Accordingly their

their Books are cenſured at *Rome*, their Opinions diſputed againſt, and their Perſons condemned. And yet all this while, we muſt believe that *theſe* ſtick together like two ſmooth Marbles *as faithfull*, though they are knocked one againſt another *as diſcourſers*; and that they perfectly agree in the ſame *ſelf-evident Rule* of *Faith*, when all their quarrels and contentions are about it; and thoſe managed with ſo great heat, that *hereſie* is charged of one ſide, and *Arch-hereſie* and *undermining Religion* on the other. Doth he think we never heard of Mr. *White*'s *Sonus Succinæ*, nor of that *Chapter* in it, where he ſaith, *that the doctrine of Pope and Councils infallibility tends to overthrow the certainty of Chriſtian Faith; and that the propagating ſuch a doctrine is a greater crime than burning Temples, Raviſhing the Sacred Virgins on the Altars, trampling on the body of Chriſt, or the ſending the Turk or Antichriſt into Chriſtian Countreys*? Or doth he think we can believe that the *Pope* and *Cardinals*, the *Jeſuits* and all the *Papiſts* of foreign Countreys do *as faithfull* agree with Mr. *White* in this? It ſeems not ſo by the proceedings in the *Court* of *Rome* againſt him, in which as appears by the cenſure of the *Inquiſition* againſt him, dated the 17*th* of *November* 1661. his doctrine is condemned not only as *Falſe*, *Seditious* and *Scandalous*, but as *Heretical* and *Erroneous* in *Faith*. And if it were not for this

this very doctrine he was there cenſured, why doth Mr. *White* ſet himſelf purpoſely to defend it in his *Tabulæ ſuffragiales*? If theſe then do agree *as faithfull*, who cannot but envy the excellent harmony of the *Roman Church*, in which men condemn each other for *Hereticks*, and yet all believe the ſame things ſtill? Well, Sir, I am in hopes upon the ſame grounds Mr. *S.* will yield us the ſame charity too, and tell us that we agree with him *as faithfull*, only we differ a little from him as *diſcourſers*; for I aſſure you, there is as great reaſon: the only difference is, we give them not ſuch *ill words* as they do each other. For let Mr. *S.* ſhew us wherein we differ more from him about the *Rule* of *Faith*, than they do among themſelves: For Mr. *White* when he hath ſaid, *that all kind of Hereſie doth ariſe from hence, that men make the Holy Scripture, or a private ſpirit, the Rule of Faith*; he preſently adds, *it is all one, if one make Councils or Pope any other way than as witneſſes to be the Authors of Faith. For*, ſaith he, *this is to ſubject the whole Church to that ſlavery, to receive any Errour for an Article of Faith, which they ſhall define, or propoſe* modo illegitimo, i. e. *any other way than as witneſſes of Tradition.* Either then we differ from Mr. *S.* only *as diſcourſers*, or he and his Brethren differ from each other more than as ſuch. And ſo any one would think who reads the oppoſitions

and

and arguments againſt each other on this ſubject, particularly Mr. *Whites Tabulæ ſuffragiales*. But let Mr. *White* ſay what he will Mr. *S.* tells me, *I am not aware how little they differ even as Divines*. The more ſhame for them to have ſuch furious heats and oppoſitions where there is ſo little difference. But as little as they differ, Mr. *White* thinks it ſafer to talk of their unity in *England*, than to try whether they be of his mind at *Rome*, by going thither to clear himſelf; for he juſtly fears he ſhould find them differ from him ſome other way than *as bare diſcourſers*. Yet let us hear Mr. *S*'s reaſon; *for*, ſaith he, *though ſome ſpeculators attribute to the Church a power of defining things not held before, yet few will ſay ſhe hath new Revelations or new Articles of Faith*. But we know the temper of theſe men better than to rely on what they barely ſay. For they ſay what they think is moſt for their purpoſe; and one of Mr. *White*'s Adverſaries, (if himſelf may be credited) plainly told him, *if the doctrine of the Popes infallibility were not true, yet it ought to be defended becauſe it was for the intereſt of the Church of* Rome: for which he is ſufficiently rebuked by him. It is one thing then what they ſay, and another what neceſſarily follows from the Doctrine which they aſſert. But for plain dealing commend me to the *Canoniſts*, who ſay expreſly, the *Church* (by which they mean the

the *Pope*) may make *new Articles of Faith*: and this is the ſenſe of the reſt, though they are loth to ſpeak out. Elſe Mr. *White* was much to blame in ſpending ſo much time in proving the contrary. But what man of common ſenſe can imagine that theſe men can mean otherwiſe, who aſſert ſuch an infallibility in *Pope* and *Councils*, as to oblige men under pain of eternal Damnation to believe thoſe things which they were not obliged to, before ſuch a definition? And what can this be elſe but to make new Articles of Faith? For an Article of Faith ſuppoſes a neceſſary obligation to believe it: now if ſome doctrine may become thus obligatory by virtue of the *Churches* definition which was not ſo before, that becomes thereby an Article of Faith which it was not before. But theſe ſubtile men have not yet learnt to diſtinguiſh a *new Article of Faith*: they do not indeed pretend that their doctrine is new, becauſe they deny any ſuch thing as new Revelation in the *Church*; but yet they muſt needs ſay, if they underſtand themſelves, that old implicit doctrines, may become new Articles of Faith by virtue of the *Churches* definition. So little are they relieved by that ſilly diſtinction *of explicit and implicit delivery* of them, which Mr. *S.* for a great Novelty acquaints us with. For what is only *implicitly delivered*, is no Article of Faith at all: for that can be no Article of Faith, which

men are not bound to believe; now there are none will ſay that men are bound to believe under pain of Damnation if they do not the things which are only implicitly delivered; but this they ſay with great confidence of all things defined by the *Church*. And let now any intelligent perſon judge; whether thoſe who aſſert ſuch things, do not differ wide enough from thoſe who reſolve all into *Oral Tradition*, and make the obligation to Faith wholly dependent upon the conſtant Tradition of any doctrine from Age to Age ever ſince the *Apoſtles* times.

§ 11. But Mr. *S.* is yet farther diſpleaſed with me for ſaying, *that Pope and Councils challenge a power to make things* de fide *in one Age, which were not in another.* For 1. he ſays, *I ſpeak it in common, and prove it not.* 2. He adds, *That take them right, this is both perfectly innocent, and unavoidably neceſſary to a Church.* And is it not ſtrange he ſhould expect any particular proofs of ſo innocent and neceſſary a thing to the being of a *Church*? But he will tell me it is in his own ſenſe of *de fide*, which I have already ſhewn to ſignifie nothing to his purpoſe. Let him therefore ſpeak out whether he doth believe any ſuch thing as inherent infallibility in the definitions of *Pope* and *Councils*? if not, I am ſure at *Rome* they will never believe that Mr. *S.* agrees with them *as faithfull*; if he doth, whether doth not ſuch an infallible de-

finition

finition bind men by virtue of it to the belief of what is then defined? if it doth, then things may become as much *de fide* by it, as if they were delivered by *Christ* or his *Apoſtles*. For thereby is ſuppoſed an equal obligation to Faith, becauſe there is a propoſition equally infallible. But will he ſay, the *Pope* doth not challenge this? Why then is the contrary Doctrine cenſured and condemned at *Rome*? Why is the other ſo eagerly contended for, by the moſt zealous ſons of that *Church*, and that not as a *School-opinion*, but as the only certain *foundation* of *Faith*? Mr. *S.* is yet pleaſed to inform me farther, *that nothing will avail me but this, if a Pope and Council ſhould define a new thing, and declare they ground themſelves on new lights, as did their firſt Reformers in* England: *but I ſhall find*, he ſaith, *no ſuch Fopperies in Faith-definitions made by the Catholick Church.* Is this the man who made choice of reaſon for his weapon? could there be a greater Calumny caſt on our *Church*, than to ſay *her Reformers grounded themſelves on new Lights*? when our great charge againſt the *Church* of *Rome* is for introducing *Novelties*, and receding from pure and primitive Antiquity. Whether the charge be true or no, yet ſure it follows they did not declare *they ground themſelves on new Lights*, but expreſly the contrary. Well, *but Pope and Councils neither define new things, nor ground themſelves*

on them : but what means the man of reaſon ? that they make no new definitions : ſurely not ; for then what did they meet for ? and what mean their decrees ? but he intends, that they deliver no new Doctrine : but how muſt that be tried ? or hath Mr. *S.* gained the Opinion of Infallibility both from *Pope* and *Councils*, that we muſt believe his bare word ? but we not only ſay but prove that even their laſt *Council* hath defined many things, which never were delivered by *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*. And it is to no purpoſe whether they ſay *they ground themſelves on new Lights*, or pretend to an *infallible aſſiſtance* ; for it comes all to the ſame at laſt. For if the aſſiſtance be infallible, what matter is it whether the Doctrine hath been revealed or no ? for on this ſuppoſition it is impoſſible that *Pope* and *Council* ſhould miſcarry. Therefore if any *Church* be guilty of *Fopperies* in Faith-definitions, it muſt be that which you miſcall *the Catholick*, but is more truly known by the name of the *Roman Church*. There is yet one piece of Mr. *S*'s ſagacity to be taken notice of as to this particular, which is, *that I am at an end of my argument, becauſe I ſay the Opinion of the Pope and Councils Infallibility is the common Doctrine maintained : in which I confound the Church with the Schools, or ſome private Opinators, and then carp at thoſe mens Tenets.* And this is the force of all that Paragraph, He tells me, *I want not Wit*

to

to know that no ſober Catholick holds humane deductions the Rule of their Faith, Schoolmen definers of it, nor the Schools the Tribunal whence to propoſe it Authoritatively and Obligingly to the generality of the Faithfull. Neither doth Mr. *S.* want the wit to know that our preſent enquiry is concerning the ſenſe of their preſent Church about the Rule of Faith. Sinee then Mr. *S.* muſt confeſs it neceſſary to Faith to know what the certain Rule of it is; let me enquire farther, whether any particular perſon can know certainly what it is, unleſs he knows what the *Church* owns for her Rule of Faith; and whether that may be owned as the *Churches* Judgment, which is ſtifly oppoſed by the moſt intereſſed perſons in the *Roman Church*, and the moſt zealous contenders for it? Eſpecially when the *Pope* who is ſaid to be *Head* of the *Church*, condemns the Doctrine aſſerted, and that only by a ſmall number of ſuch who are as much oppoſed by themſelves, as by any of us. Is it then poſſible to know the *Churches* Judgment or not? if not, 'tis to no purpoſe to ſearch for a *Rule* of *Faith*: if it be, which way can we come to know it, either by moſt *Voices* or the ſenſe of the *Governours* of the *Church*; either of the ways, I dare put it to a fair tryal whether *Oral Tradition*, or the *Infallibility* of *Pope* and *Councils* be the Doctrine moſt owned in the *Church* of *Rome*? But Mr. *S.* ſtill tells us, *theſe are only private*

Opinators and Schoolmen who aſſert the contrary doctrine to his. But will not they much more ſay on the other ſide, that this way of *oral tradition* is a novel fancy of ſome few *half Catholicks* in *England*, and tends to ſubvert the *Roman Church.* But is the preſent *Pope* with Mr. *S. a private opinator*, or was the laſt a *mere Schoolman*? I am ſure what ever Mr. *S.* thinks of him, he thought not ſo of himſelf when he ſaid, *he was no Divine* in the controverſie of *Janſenius.* Doth the *Court* of *Rome* ſignifie no more with Mr. *S.* than a company of *ſcholaſtick Pedants* that know not what the ſenſe of the *Church* is, concerning the rule of faith? I meddle not with the *Schools* but with the authority of the *preſent Church*, and him whom Mr. *S.* owns for the *head* of it: and is it conſiſtent with his *headſhip* to condemn that doctrine which contains in it the onely certain *rule* of *faith*? Mr. *S.* may then ſee they were no ſuch impertinent *Topicks* which I inſiſted on, and as ſtout as Mr. *S.* ſeems to be, I am apt to believe he would not look on the cenſure of the *Inquiſition* as an impertinent *Topick.*

§ 12. But at laſt Mr. *S.* offers at ſomething whereby he would ſatisfie me of the ſenſe of the *Church*, as to this particular, and therefore asks, *whether I never heard of ſuch a thing as the Council of* Trent? I muſt ingenuouſly confeſs I have; and ſeen more a great deal of it, than I am ſatisfied with.

But

But what of that? *there*, he tells me, *I may find a clear ſolution of any doubt by the conſtant procedure of that moſt grave Synod in its definitions.* That is, I hope to find that oral tradition was acknowledged there as the onely *ſelf-evident* rule of faith. If I do this, I confeſs my ſelf ſatisfied in this enquiry. But how much to the contrary is there very obvious in the proceedings of it? For in the *4th Seſſion* the Decree is, *That Scripture and Tradition ſhould be embraced with equal piety and reverence*; and the reaſon is, *becauſe the doctrine of faith is contain'd partly in Scripture, partly in Tradition*; but what arts muſt Mr. *S.* uſe to infer from hence, that *oral tradition* in contradiſtinction to *Scripture* was looked on as the onely rule of faith? I cannot but ſay, that the ruling men of that *Council* were men wiſe enough in their *generation*; and they were too wiſe wholly to exclude *Scripture*; but becauſe they knew *that* of it ſelf could not ſerve their purpoſes, they therefore help it out with *Tradition*, and make both together the *complete rule of faith.* Where I pray in all the proceedings of that *Council* doth Mr. *S.* find them define any thing on the account of *oral tradition*? inſtead of which we find continual bandyings about the ſenſe of *Scripture* and *Fathers*, which might have been all ſpared, if they had been ſo wiſe as to conſider, they could

not but know the ſenſe of the *preſent Church*, nor that of the precedent, and ſo up to the time of *Chriſt*. But they were either ſo ignorant as not to light on this happy invention; or ſo wiſe and knowing as to deſpiſe it. It is true, they would not have their doctrines looked on as *novelties*, therefore they ſpeak much of *tradition* and the *ancient faith*; but that was not by what their *Parents* taught them, but what the *Fathers* of the *Church* delivered in their writings; for by theſe they judged of *traditions*, and not the *oral* way. And therefore I ſee little reaſon to believe, that this was either the ſenſe of the *Council* of *Trent*, or is the ſenſe of any number of *Roman Catholicks*, much leſs *of the whole Church, none excepted*, as Mr. *S.* in his confident way expreſſes it. P. 212. *And if he will*, as he ſaith, *diſavow the maintaining any point, or affecting any way which is not aſſented to by all.* I hope to ſee Mr. *S.* retract this opinion, and either fall in with the *Court* of *Rome*, or return, as reaſon leads him, into the boſom of the *Church* of *England*. But there ſeems to be ſomewhat more in what follows, *viz. that though ſchoolmen queſtion the perſonal infallibility of the Pope, or of the Roman Clergy, nay of a General Council, yet all affirm the infallibility of tradition, or the living voice of the Church eſſential; and this*, he ſaith, *is held by all, held firmly*, and *that it is abſolutely*

ſolutely infallible. To this therefore I anſwer, either Mr. *S.* means that none do affirm that the *univerſal tradition* of the *Church eſſential* can err, or that the *Church* of *Rome*, being the *Church eſſential*, cannot err in her tradition: But which way ſo ever he takes it, I ſhall eaſily ſhew how far it is from proving that he deſigns it for. For if he take it in the firſt ſenſe, *viz.* that *all the faithfull* in *all ages* could not concur in an errour, then he may as well prove *Proteſtants* of his mind as *Papiſts*, for this is the foundation on which we believe the particular Books of *Scripture.* If this therefore proves any thing, it proves more than he intends, *viz.* that while we thus oppoſe each other, we do perfectly agree together; and truely ſo we do, as much as they do among themſelves. But if Mr. *S*'s meaning be, *that all of their Religion own the Roman Church to be the Church eſſential, and on that account, that it cannot err*, ſetting aſide the abſurdity of the opinion it ſelf,) I ſay from hence it doth not follow, that they make *oral tradition* the rule of *faith*, becauſe it is moſt evident, that the ground why they ſay their *Church* cannot err, is not on Mr. *S*'s *principles*, but on the ſuppoſition of an *infallible aſſiſtance*, which preſerves that *Church* from errour. So that this falls far ſhort of proving, that they are all agreed in this rule of faith; which is a thing ſo far from probability

bability, that he might, by the ſame argument prove, that *Scripture* is owned by them all to be the rule of faith. For I hope *it is held by all*, and *held firmly*, that the living voice of *God* in *Scripture*, as delivered to us, is *infallible*; and if ſo, then there is as much ground for this as the other. But if we enquire what it is men make a *rule* of *faith*, we muſt know not onely that they believe *tradition infallible*, but on what account they do ſo. For if tradition be believed *infallible* barely on the account of a promiſe of *infallibility* to the *preſent Church*, then the reſolution of faith is not into the *tradition*, but into that *infallible aſſiſtance*; and conſequently the rule of faith is not, what bare tradition delivers, but what that *Church*, which cannot err in judging tradition, doth propoſe to us. It is not therefore their being agreed in *general, that Tradition is infallible*, doth make them agree in the ſame *rule* of *faith*; but they muſt agree in the ground of that *infallibility*, *viz.* that it depends on this, *that no age could conſpire to deceive the next.* But all perſons who underſtand any thing of the *Roman Church*, know very well that the general reaſon why tradition is believed infallible, is, becauſe they firſt believe the *Church* to be *infallible*; whereas Mr. *S.* goes the contrary way, and makes the *infallibility* of the *Church*, to depend on the *infallibility* of *tradition.* And there-

therefore, for all that I can ſee, we muſt ſtill oppoſe *private Opinators* in this controverſie; the *Church* of *Rome*, not having declared her ſelf at all on M. *S*'s behalf, but the contrary, and the generality believing on the account of the preſent *Churches* infallibility. And it is ſtrange Mr. *S.* ſhould find no difference between mens reſolving faith into common ſenſe, and into the immediate aſſiſtance of the *Holy Ghoſt*. If this then *be the firſt principle of controverſie*, as Mr. *S.* pretends, we ſee how unlikely they are to agree about other matters, who are ſo much divided about the principle of reſolving them. And if this be the ground of faith, then moſt *Romaniſts* build on a wrong Foundation. But if the *infallibility of oral tradition* be the foundation on which *that formidable ſtructure is erecting*, which he ſpeaks of, wo then to the *Court* of *Rome*, for that is known to build on quite a different foundation. And *if this*, as he ſaith, *riſes apace, and has advanced many ſtories in a ſmall time*, it onely lets us know how faſt their diviſions grow, and that they are building ſo faſt one againſt another, that their *Church* will not ſtand between them. By this diſcourſe, Mr. *S.* pretends *to anſwer all thoſe If's which follow*; which are theſe, *In caſe the Church may determine things* de fide, *which were not before, whether the preſent Church doth then believe as the precedent* P. 213.

dent did or no? if it did, how comes any thing to be de fide *which was not before? if it did not, what aſſurance can I have that every age of the Church believes juſt as the precedent did, and no otherwiſe; When I ſee they profeſs the contrary? And if a thing may be* de fide *in one age, which was not in a foregoing, then a Church may deliver that as a matter of faith at one time, which was never accounted ſo before; by which means the preſent Church may oblige me to believe that as a matter of faith, which never was ſo in Chriſt's or the Apoſtles times, and ſo the infallibility on the account of tradition is deſtroyed.* To all which Mr. *S.* gives a very eaſie anſwer, *viz. that they do not hold any diſparate or unimplied points of faith; but ſuch as are involved and implied in the main point.* This is no more eaſily ſaid than underſtood; for if theſe be implied in the former, how can there come a new obligation to believe them? For to take his own inſtance, will any man in his ſenſes ſay, that he that believes *homo eſt animal rationale,* doth not believe *homo eſt animal*? and this he makes choice of as an example, *how one point of faith may be involved in another, ſo as to receive a diſtinct obligation to believe it.* I grant that *homo eſt animal* is involved in the other, but he that ſhall ſay, that after he hath aſſented to that propoſition, *homo eſt animal rationale,* he

he may be capable of a new obligation to believe the former, which is involved in this, it may be juſtly queſtioned whether ſuch an one, as to himſelf, can truely ſay, *homo eſt animal rationale*, or no. But after ſuch rare ſubtilties, he doth very well to tell me, *that I ought to conſider what Logick tells us, that the concluſion is in the premiſſes, which reflexion* (in his court-like expreſſion) he ſaith, *will much unblunder my thoughts.* But let the concluſion be as long as it will in the *premiſſes*, will any man in his wits ſay, that he that believes the *truth* of the *premiſſes*, is not hereby bound to believe the concluſion? and the more the one is involved in the other, the leſs is it poſſible to make the obligation to believe them diſtinct. And it is hard for me to believe, that this is a way *to unblunder my thoughts*, when I ſee what horrible confuſion ſuch expreſſions argue in his own. Let the *Church* then clear her thoughts never ſo much, yet all this cannot amount to a diſtinct obligation to believe thoſe things which were involved before, but to a more explicit declaring them for the *Churches* peace and ſatisfaction. The onely concluſion then involved in theſe premiſſes, is, that if ſome things may be *de fide* in one age which were not in another, then the preſent age may believe otherwiſe than the precedent did. And if this doctrine be held in the *Church* P. 214.

of

of *Rome*, nothing can be more evident, than that Mr. *S's first principle of controversie*, is far from being the doctrine of the *Roman Church*, which was the thing to be proved.

§ 13. My second chief argument against this way of *oral tradition* was, *that it had not been owned in all ages of the Christian Church*; to manifest which, I enquired into the reason of the obligation in any age of the *Church* to believe and practise just as the precedent did. Mr. *S.* rejoices in that confession of mine, *that the onely thing to be proved in this case is, that every age of the Church, and all persons in it, look'd on themselves as obliged not to vary in any thing from the doctrine and practice of the precedent age.* And I there offer the choice of three ways to prove it, *reason*, *testimony*, or *tradition*; he tells me, *he excepts the way of reason*; yet quarrels with me for pressing for a *demonstrative medium* to prove it, when yet Mr. *S.* seldom speaks under the rate of *demonstrations*. But he thereby notes *the unconsonancy of my carriage*, Wherein I wonder? That I should desire them to perform this promise, *viz.* to give us *demonstrations* for the grounds of faith? But saith withall, *he will yield me the honour of professing I have no demonstration but probability for the ground of mine, and he makes this serious protestation for himself, that he should esteem him-*

himſelf very diſhoneſt, did he aſſert and preſs on others any argument for the ground of his faith, which he judged not evident, that is demonſtrative. What is it theſe men mean, when they cry up their own way for *demonſtrative*, and ſay that we build our faith merely on *probabilities*? Do they ſay, that *Religion* is capable of ſtrict and rigorous *demonſtration*? If ſo, let them demonſtrate the *being* of *God* and *immortality* of the *ſoul*, with as much evidence, as *that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.* And it is ſtrange, if they think *particular problems* in religion are more capable of *demonſtration* than thoſe *Theorems* on which they are built. But by all the enquiry I can make, all the difference between us is, that Mr. *S.* will have that called a *demonſtration*, which is ſcarce a *probability*; and we call that *ſufficient reaſon*, which any wiſe man may ſafely rely on in matters of *Religion.* In the mean time how much do we ſuffer by our modeſty, that becauſe we ſpeak not as big as Mr. *S.* does, we muſt be cenſured preſently to have nothing but *probabilities* for our faith? Are thoſe bare *probabilities* which leave no ſuſpicion of doubt behind them? And ſuch we freely aſſert the grounds of our Religion to do; *i. e.* I aſſert, that we have the higheſt actual certainty of the truth of our *Religion*, which the mind of any reaſonable man can deſire;

and

and if Mr. *S*'s *demonſtrations* can do any more than this, let him tell us what it is. For my part, I know nothing higher in the mind of man than a *certain aſſent*, and if I did not think there was the greateſt ground in *Religion* for that, I abhor diſſimulation ſo much, that I ſhould leave off perſuading men to embrace it. And if any men have made us ſhy of the word *demonſtration* and *infallibility*, they are ſuch men as Mr. *S*. have done it, who talk of theſe things, when their arguments fall beneath ſome of the remoteſt *probabilities* we inſiſt on. Nay, if there be any force in his *demonſtration*, as to matter of fact, it hath been uſed by us long before his Book ſaw the light. But we love to give the true names to things, and not to loſe our credit with all intelligent perſons, by playing *Mountebanks* in *Religion*, crying up thoſe things for *infallible cures*, which an ordinary capacity may diſcern the inſufficiency of. But was it any thing but juſtice and reaſon in me to expect and call for a *demonſtration* from them who talk of nothing under it? And therefore I ſaid, *that it was impoſſible to demonſtrate this way of oral tradition, unleſs it were proved impoſſible for men not to think themſelves obliged to believe and do all juſt as their predeceſſours did.* For where the contrary is not onely poſſible, but eaſily ſuppoſable, as that men may

may believe thoſe things, as new articles of faith which are defined by *Pope* and *Council*; I wonder how Mr. *S.* will demonſtrate, that men muſt look on themſelves as obliged to believe juſt as their predeceſſours did? For I had thought demonſtrations had never place in contingent propoſitions; but it ſeems Mr. *S.* who tells me, *Logick will unblunder my thoughts*, intends to make a new one for me. And I aſſure you ſo he had need, before I ſhall ever call his arguments demonſtrations: and although he thinks himſelf *very honeſt* in calling them ſo, yet I ſhould think him much *wiſer* if he did not.

§ 14. But before I come to the particular debate of theſe things, I freely tell him, that I grant all he requeſts; I ſhall *take along with me the nature of the matter in hand, the doctrines and practices ſpoken of, the manner of delivering them, the neceſſary circumſtances which give weight to both*; yet for all theſe, I cannot look on his way as *demonſtrative*. And that both our meanings may be better underſtood, it is very neceſſary the Reader ſhould have a true account of the ſtate of the Queſtion between us. And if he will believe me, I never intended to diſpute with him or any one elſe, *whether men were bound to wear their clothes, or build houſes, or manage eſtates juſt as their predeceſſours did*; but whether every age is obliged to believe and practiſe juſt as the

P. 236.

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precedent did, by virtue of mere *oral tradition*; for about that is all the controverſie between us. I do not deny, but a ſucceeding age may look on it ſelf as bound to believe what the precedent did; but whether that obligation doth ariſe purely from the delivery of that doctrine by the precedent in the way of *tradition*, is the thing in diſpute between us. For in caſe the ground of faith be wholly the written Word, conveyed from age to age, I deny not but an obligation to believe deſcends with the doctrine to every ſucceeding age. But that which Mr. *S.* is to prove is, *that abſtractly from Scripture every age is abſolutely bound to believe juſt as the precedent did*, without any enquiry whether that doctrine doth agree with *Scriptures* or no; but that he is therefore bound to believe all which is propoſed to him, becauſe it was the doctrine of the immediately preceding age. And this is that which I deny, and deſire Mr. *S.* to prove. For which he firſt gives us a large inſtance in hiſtorical matters, and then comes to the matters of *Chriſtian Faith*. His inſtance is, *in* Alexander's *conqueſt of* Aſia, *as to which*, he ſaith,

P. 218. *that the memory of it is freſh and lively, though ſome thouſand years ſince; and that the univerſal and ſtrong perſuaſion of this matter of fact was not cauſed by Books, as* Curtius *his Hiſtory, but by humane tradition; that the continuance of this perſuaſion was the notoriety of the fact to the*

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then livers, which obliged them to relate it to their poſterity, and that this teſtifying by the fore-fathers, was that which obliged poſterity to believe things, as true, becauſe there could be no imaginable motive why the whole world ſhould conſpire to deceive them, or be deceivable in their ſenſations; on which principle it paſſed to the next age, and ſo came down by way of tradition to our days; and the obligation to believe in every age depended upon this, that the ſenſes of the firſt could not be deceived; and having this ſecurity in every age, that no one would conſpire to deceive the next, it follows that no age could ſay a former age teſtified ſo, unleſs it did; ſo therefore, ſaith he, *it follows demonſtratively, that it was teſtified; and ſo the deſcendants in every age to the very end of the world have the ſame obligation to believe their immediate fore-fathers, ſaying it was teſtified by theirs, and ſo to the very firſt, who were witneſſes of his actions.* This is the ſubſtance of what he more largely diſcourſes in ſeveral Paragraphs; which when he hath done, he tells me, *he expects what I will reply to this diſcourſe.* P. 223. Not to fruſtrate therefore his expectation, and in order to the Readers ſatisfaction, we are to conſider, that in the preſent caſe there are two diſtinct queſtions to be reſolved: 1. How a *matter* of *fact* evident to the world comes to be conveyed to poſterity? 2. By what means a complete hiſtory of all paſſages

relating to it may be conveyed? As to the firſt, I grant that a *fact* ſo notorious as *Alexander*'s conqueſt of *Aſia* might have been preſerved by humane tradition, and conveyed in a certain way from one age to another. But if we enquire into that which is alone proper to our queſtion, *viz.* by what means we may judge what is *true* and *falſe* as to the *particulars* of that *conqueſt*, then I deny that bare *tradition* is to be relyed on in this caſe. For the certainty of conveyance of all particulars doth depend not upon the *bare veracity*, but the *capacity* and *skill* of *communicating* from one age to another. For which one would think we need no clearer evidence than the conſideration of the different account of former *times* in the ſeveral Nations of the world. For who can imagine, but the *barbarous Nations* were as unwilling to deceive their poſterity as any other? yet we ſee a vaſt difference in the *hiſtories* of former *ages* among them, and more civilized people. And I wiſh Mr. *S.* would rather have inſtanced in ſome hiſtory which had been preſerved merely by tradition, and not in ſuch a one, which, if any other, hath been moſt carefully recorded and propagated to poſterity. If Mr. *S.* would have undertaken to have told us, who they were that firſt peopled *America*, and from what place they came, by the *tradition* of the preſent inhabitants, and what famous

actions

actions had been done there in former ages, we might have thought indeed, that *ſole tradition* had been a very ſafe way to convey matters of fact from one age to another. But ſince all Mr. *S*'s arguments will hold as well for the *Scythians* and *Americans*, and the moſt barbarous Nations, as the moſt civil and polite; what reaſon can Mr. *S.* give, why there is not among them as certain an account of former ages, as among the *Greeks* and *Romans*? Were not their *ſenſes*, who ſaw thoſe matters of fact, as uncapable of being *deceived* as others? Was not every age among them as unwilling to deceive their poſterity as elſewhere? Yet notwithſtanding the force of Mr. *S*'s demonſtration, we ſee for want of *letters* how groſly ignorant they are of what was done before them. And if this principle were true, why have we not as true an account of the *eldeſt* ages of the world, as of any other? Nay, why were *letters* invented, and writing ever uſed, if tradition had been found ſo infallible? But it is one thing ſuperficially to diſcourſe what is impoſſible ſhould be otherwiſe, and another to conſider what really hath been in the world. Doth not the conſtant experience of all times prove, that where any *hiſtory* hath not been timely recorded, it hath been ſoon corrupted by notorious falſities, or obſcured by fabulous reports? As we ſee among our ſelves, what difference there

is in point of certainty between the ſeveral ſtories of K. *Arthur* and *William* the *Conquerour*; what will Mr. *S.* ſay, that thoſe who lived in K. *Arthur*'s time could not know what he did, or that they conſpired to deceive their poſterity? but if tradition be ſo *infallible*, why have we not the ancient ſtory of *Britain* as exact as the modern? If Mr. *S.* will impute it to the *peoples ignorance, want of letters, frequent conqueſts* by other Nations, and *ſucceeding barbariſm*, he may eaſily find how many ways there are for *matters of fact* to be ſoon loſt or corrupted, when they have not been diligently preſerved by authentick records; and that without one age conſpiring to deceive another. But notwithſtanding Mr. *S*'s confidence, I cannot think it poſſible for Mr. *S.* to believe, that we ſhould have had as true an account of *Alexander's conqueſt of Aſia*, if *Arrian, Curtius*, or *Plutarch* had never writ his ſtory, as we have now. Yet this he muſt aſſert by virtue of his principle. And he that can believe that, I wonder he ſhould ſcruple believing the *Pope's infallibility*; for certainly no principle of the *Jeſuits* is more wild and abſurd than this is. Beſides, I admire how it came into Mr. *S*'s head to think, no errour could come into hiſtory *unleſs one age conſpired to deceive another*, when we find no age agreed in the preſent matters of *fact* which are done in it, as to the grounds and

and particulars of them; to give Mr. *S.* an inſtance home to his purpoſe, in the late *Council* of *Trent* we ſee already what different repreſentations there are made of it in ſo little a time as hath already paſſed ſince the ſitting of it. One, though he had all the advantages imaginable of knowing all proceedings in it, living at the ſame time, converſing with the perſons preſent at it, having the *memoires* and records of the *Secretaries* themſelves, yet his ſtory is ſince endeavoured to be blaſted by a great perſon of the *Roman Church*, as fictitious and partial. We ſee then it is at leaſt ſuppoſed that intereſt and prejudice may have a great hand in abuſing the world in matter of ſtory, though one age never agree to deceive another. And inſtead of being perſuaded by Mr. *S*'s demonſtrations, I am ſtill of the mind, that we have no ſufficient ſecurity of the truth of any ſtory, which was not written while thoſe perſons were in being who were able to contradict the errours of it. However I deny not, but ſome notorious matters of fact, ſuch as *Alexander's* bare *conqueſts* of *Aſia*, might by the viſible effects of it be preſerved both in *Aſia* and *Greece* for a long time. But if we come to enquire particularly, whether this or that was done by him in his conqueſt, which is alone pertinent to our purpoſe, we have no ſecurity at all from tradition, but onely P. 213.

from the moſt authentick records of that ſtory. And by this, I hope Mr. *S.* will have cauſe to thank me for *unblundering his thoughts* (his own civil expreſſions,) and ſhewing him how errours may come into a ſtory without one age conſpiring to deceive the next; and what a vaſt difference there is between preſerving a bare matter of fact, and all the particulars relating to it. And hereby he may eaſily ſee how far the obligation extends in believing the report of former ages. For there can be no obligation to believe any farther than there is evidence of truth in the matter we are obliged to. If then there be not onely a poſſibility, but a very great probability of miſtakes and errours in matters of fact, I pray what obligation doth there lye upon men abſolutely to believe what is delivered by the preceding age? But to put an iſſue to this controverſie, let Mr. *S.* examine himſelf, and try if he can name one ſtory that was never written, which was ever certainly propagated from one age to another by mere oral tradition; and if he cannot, he may thereby ſee how little real force his argument hath in the world. For all the force of tradition lies in an unqueſtionable conveyance of thoſe *Books* which contain in them the true reports of the actions of the times they were written in. But can Mr. *S.* think, that if the *Roman hiſtory* had never been written,

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it had been poſſible for us to have known what was done under the *Kings* and *Conſuls* as now we do? Yet if his principle holds, this neceſſarily follows; for *thoſe of that Age could not but know them*, and *no Age ſince could conſpire to deceive the next*. And from hence, the moſt uſefull conſequence of all is, that Mr. *S.* might have writ a Hiſtory from the beginning of the world to this day, with a full relation of all *particulars*, if there had never been any *Book* written in the world before. And doth not Mr. *S.* deſerve immortal Credit for ſo rare an invention as this is, and all built on nothing ſhort of *demonſtrations*?

§ 15. But Mr. *S.* very prudently *foreſees*, *what it is I muſt be forced to recur to*, viz. *that being baffled with his former demonſtration, I have no other ſhift to betake my ſelf to, but to ſay the caſe is different between Hiſtories and Points of Faith.* And therefore to bring his buſineſs home, he applies it at large to the delivery of the *Chriſtian Faith*, which that he might do in more ample ſort, he very finely deſcants on the old *Verſe*, *Quis, quid, ubi, &c.* containing the circumſtances of humane Actions, and from every one of them derives Arguments for the *Infallibility* of *Oral Tradition*; which briefly and in plain *Engliſh* may be ſummed up thus; *Since the Authour of this Doctrine was the Son of God, the Doctrine it ſelf ſo excellent, and delivered* P. 224.

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in ſo publick a manner, in the moſt convincing way, by Miracle and good Living, and for ſo good an end as to ſave mens Souls, and that by writing it in mens hearts, and teſtified to others; and all this at a time when men might judge of the Miracles and Motives for believing it; therefore ſince in all theſe reſpects it was incomparably beyond the ſtory of Alexander's *Conqueſts, it follows, that in a manner infinitely greater muſt the obligation be to believe Chriſt's Doctrine, than* Alexander's *or* William *the Conquerour's Victories, or any Hiſtory of the like nature whatſoever.* All which I freely grant, but cannot yet ſee how from thence it follows; that *Oral Tradition is the only Rule of Faith*, or the means whereby we are to judge what is the *Doctrine* of *Chriſt*, and what not. Thoſe Arguments I confeſs prove, that the *Chriſtians* of the firſt Age were highly concerned to enquire into the truth of theſe things, and that they had the greateſt reaſon imaginable to believe them; and that it is not poſſible to conceive that they ſhould not endeavour to propagate ſo excellent a Doctrine, and of ſo high concernment to the world. But the queſtion is, whether abſtractly from the *Books* written in the firſt Age of the *Chriſtian Church*, there is ſo much Infallibility in the *Oral Tradition* of every Age, that nothing could be embraced for Chriſt's Doctrine which was not; and conſequently, whether every Age were bound to believe abſolutely

abſolutely what was delivered it by the Precedent for the Doctrine of *Chriſt* ? Mr. *S.* therefore puts himſelf to a needleſs task of proving that every Age was bound to believe the *Doctrine of Chriſt*, which I never queſtioned ; but the diſpute is, whether every Age be bound on the account of *Oral Tradition* to believe what is delivered by the Precedent for *Chriſt's Doctrine*. But it is to be obſerved all along how carefully Mr. *S.* avoids mentioning the *written Books* of the *New Teſtament* ; becauſe he knew all his game about Oral Tradition would be quite ſpoiled by a true ſtating the matter of Fact in the firſt Ages of the *Chriſtian Church*. I hope he will not be angry with me, for asking him that queſtion about the *Scripture*, which he asks me about the *Council* of *Trent* ; *did he never hear of ſuch a thing as the Scripture ? or is it ſo hard to find it* ? But if he hath heard of it, I intreat him to reſolve me theſe *Queſtions* : 1. Whether he doth not believe, that the Books of the *New Teſtament* were written at ſuch a time, when the matters of Fact therein Recorded, were capable of being throughly examined ? which he cannot deny upon his own principle ; for Tradition being then infallible as to the *Doctrine* of *Chriſt*, the writers of theſe Books cannot be conceived to deliver it amiſs, unleſs they reſolved to contradict the preſent Tradition of the *Church* ; which if they had done, thoſe Books could never

never have found any reception among *Chriſtians*. If Tradition then convey the Doctrine of Chriſt infallibly, theſe Books muſt convey it infallibly, becauſe they contain in them the infallible Tradition of the firſt Age of the *Chriſtian Church*; and were written at the time when many perſons living had been able to diſprove any thing contained therein repugnant to truth. And that theſe Books were written by thoſe perſons whoſe names they bear, I appeal to Mr. *S*'s own Rule, *Tradition*; for if that be infallible in any thing, it muſt be in this; and if one Age could conſpire to deceive another in a matter of ſuch concernment, what ſecurity can be had, that it may not do ſo in all other things? 2. Whether he believes, that thoſe whoſe intention was to write an account of the Life, Actions, and Doctrine of *Chriſt*, did leave any thing out of their Books which did relate to them as of concernment for us to believe? For upon Mr. *S*'s principles, any one may eaſily know what the Tradition of the *Church* is; and eſpecially ſuch certainly who were either preſent themſelves at the matters of Fact, or heard them from thoſe who were; and what ſatisfaction can any one deſire greater than this? But the queſtion is, whether this Teſtimony were not more ſafely depoſited in the *Church* to be conveyed by word of mouth, than it could be by being committed to writing by ſuch who were Eye and

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Ear witneſſes of the Actions and Doctrine of Chriſt? Upon which I advance ſome farther *Queries.* 3. If Oral Tradition were the more certain way, why was any thing written at all? It may be Mr. *S.* will tell us, *for moral inſtructions, and to give precepts of good life*; but then why may not theſe be as infallibly conveyed by Tradition as Doctrines of Faith? And why then were any matters of Fact and points of Faith inſerted in the Books of the *New Teſtament*? By which it certainly appears, that the intention of writing them was to preſerve them to poſterity. Let Mr. *S.* tell me whether it was conſiſtent with the wiſdom of men, much leſs with the wiſdom of an *infinite Being* to imploy men to do that which might be far better done another way, and when it is done can give no ſatisfaction to the minds of men? 4. Whether thoſe things which are capable of being underſtood when they are ſpoken, ceaſe to be ſo when they are written? For Mr. *S.* ſeems to underſtand thoſe terms of a *living voice*, and *dead letters* in a very ſtrict and rigorous manner; as though the ſenſe were only *quick* when ſpoken, and became buried in *dead letters.* But Mr. *S.* ſeems with the ſagacious *Indian* to admire how it is poſſible for *dead letters* and *unſens'd characters* to expreſs mens meanings as well as words. I cannot enter into Mr. *S*'s apprehenſion, how 24 Letters by their various diſpoſition can expreſs

preſs matters of Faith? And yet to increaſe the wonder, he writes about matters of Faith, while he is proving that matters of Faith cannot be conveyed by writing. So that Mr. *S*'s own writing is the beſt demonſtration againſt himſelf; and he confutes his own *Sophiſtry* with his fingers, as *Diogenes* did *Zeno*'s by his motion. For doth Mr. *S.* hope to perſwade men, that Tradition is a Rule of Faith by his Book or not? If not, to what purpoſe doth he write? If he doth, then it is to be hoped ſome matters of Faith may be intelligibly conveyed by writing; eſpecially if Mr. *S.* doth it. But by no means we are to believe that ever the *Spirit* of *God* can do it. For whatever is written by men aſſiſted by that, is according to him but a heap of *dead Letters*, and *inſignificant Characters*; when Mr. *S.* the mean while is full of *ſenſe* and *demonſtration*. Happy man that can thus out-doe infinite Wiſdom, and write far beyond either *Prophets* or *Apoſtles*. But if he will condeſcend ſo far as to allow that to inſpired Perſons which he confidently believes of himſelf, *viz.* that he can write a Book full of *ſenſe*, and that any ordinary Capacity may apprehend the deſign of it, our Controverſie is at an end; for then matters of Faith may be intelligibly and certainly conveyed to poſterity by the Books of *Scripture*; and if ſo, there will be no need of any recourſe to *Oral Tradition*. 5. If the Books of *Scripture*

ture did not certainly and intelligibly convey all matters of Faith, what made them be received with ſo much Veneration in the firſt Ages of the *Chriſtian Church*? which were beſt able to judge of the truth of the matters contained in them, and the uſefulneſs of the Books themſelves. And therein we ſtill find, that Appeals were made to them, that they thought themſelves concerned to vindicate them againſt all Objections of Heathens and others; and the Reſolution of Faith was made into them, and not Tradition, as I have already manifeſted, and muſt not repeat.

6. Whether it be in the leaſt credible, ſince the Books of *Scripture* were ſuppoſed to contain the Doctrines of Faith, that every Age of the Church ſhould look on it ſelf as obliged abſolutely to believe the Doctrine of the Precedent by virtue of an Oral Tradition? For ſince they reſolved their Faith into the written Books, how is it poſſible they ſhould believe on the account of an Oral Tradition? Although then the *Apoſtles* did deliver the Doctrine of Chriſt to all their Diſciples; yet ſince the Records of it were embraced in the Church, men judged of the truth or falſhood of Doctrines, by the conveniency or repugnancy of them to what was contained in thoſe Books. By which we underſtand, that the obligation to believe what was taught by the precedent Age, did not ariſe from the Oral Tradition of it, but

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but by the ſatisfaction of the preſent Age, that the Doctrine delivered by it was the ſame with that contained in *Scripture.*

P. 229, &c. § 16. It is time now to return to Mr. *S.* who proceeds ſtill to manifeſt *this obligation in poſterity to believe what was delivered as matter of Faith, by the precedent Age of the Church*; but the force of all is the ſame ſtill; *viz. that otherwiſe one Age muſt conſpire to deceive the next.* But the inconſequence of that, I have fully ſhewed already, unleſs he demonſtrates it impoſſible for Errors to come in any other way: For if we reduce the ſubſtance of what he ſaith to a Syllogiſtical form, it comes to this; Where there is no poſſibility of Error, there is an abſolute obligation to Faith; but there is no poſſibility of Error in the Tradition of any Age of the *Church: ergo* in every Age there is an abſolute obligation to believe the Tradition of the preſent *Church.* The *minor* he thus proves; If no Age of the *Church* can be ignorant of what the precedent taught, or conſpire to deceive the next, then there is no poſſibility of Error coming into the Tradition of the *Church* in any Age; but the Antecedent is true, and therefore the conſequent. Now, who ſees not that the force of all this lies not in proving the *minor propoſition*, or that no Age could conſpire to deceive another? but the conſequence, *viz.* that no Error can come into a *Church*, but by a general miſtake, in

in one whole Age, or the general impoſture of it which we utterly deny; and have ſhewed him already the falſeneſs of it from his own conceſſions. And I might more largely ſhew it from thoſe Doctrines or Opinions which they themſelves acknowledge to have come into their Church without any ſuch general miſtake or impoſture, as the *Doctrines* of *Papal Infallibility*, and the common belief of *Purgatory*. The very ſame way that Mr. *White* and Mr. *S.* will ſhew us how theſe came in, we will ſhew him how many others came in as Erroneous and Scandalous as thoſe are. For whether *they* account theſe matters of Faith or no, it is certain many among them do, and that the far greateſt number, who aſſert and believe them to be the Doctrine of their *Church* too. If therefore theſe might come in without one Age miſtaking or deceiving the next, why might not all thoſe come in the ſame way which we charge upon them as the Errors of their *Church*? And in the ſame manner that Corrupt Doctrines come in, may Corrupt Practices too, ſince *theſe*, as he ſaith, *ſpring from the other*. He might therefore have ſaved himſelf the trouble of finding *out how an acute Wit, or great Scholar would diſcover the weakneſs of this way.* P. 237. For without pretending to be either of theſe, I have found out another way of Attacking it, than Mr. *S.* looked for; *viz.* from his

own Principles and Conceſſions; ſhewing how Errors might come into a Church, without a total Deception or Conſpiracy in any one Age. Which if it be true, he cannot bind me to believe what ever he tells me the preſent Church delivers, unleſs he can prove that this never came into the Church as a Speculation or private Opinion, and from thence by degrees hath come to be accounted a point of Faith. Therefore his way of proof is now quite altered, and he cannot ſay we are bound to believe whatever the preſent Church delivers; for that which he calls the preſent Church, may have admitted Speculations and private Opinions into Doctrines of Faith; but he muſt firſt prove ſuch Doctrines delivered by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, and that from his time down to our Age they have been received by the whole Church for matters of Faith; and when he hath done this, as to any of the points in controverſie between us, I will promiſe him to be his *Proſelyte*. But he ought ſtill to remember, that he is not to prove it impoſſible for one whole Age to conſpire to deceive the next; but that ſuppoſing that it is impoſſible for any Errors to come into the Tradition of the Church. Let us now ſee what Mr. *S.* objects againſt thoſe words I then uſed againſt the demonſtrating this way; *It is hard to conceive what reaſon ſhould inforce it, but ſuch as proves the impoſſi-*

impoſſibility of the contrary; and they have underſtandings of another Mould from others, who can conceive it impoſſible men ſhould not think themſelves obliged to believe and do all juſt as their Predeceſſors. And whatever Mr. *S.* ſays to the contrary, I cannot yet ſee, P. 234. but that therein I argued *from the very nature and conſtitution of the thing.* For that which I looked for, was a *demonſtration*, which I ſuppoſed could not be unleſs the impoſſibility of the contrary were demonſtrated. But if it be poſſible for Men, *Chriſtians*, nay *Romaniſts* to believe on other accounts than Tradition of the precedent Age, I pray what demonſtration can there be, that men muſt think themſelves obliged to believe and do all juſt as their Predeceſſors did? Surely if Mr. *S*'s Fancy had not been very extravagant, he could never have thought here of *mens being obliged to cut their Beards, or wear ſuch Garters and Hat-bands as their Fore-fathers did.* For do not I mention *believing firſt, and then doing*? by which it were eaſie to apprehend, that I meant matters of Faith, and ſuch Practices as flow from them. Neither was there any ſuch *Crafty and Sophiſtical Dealing* as he charges me with; for I am content his Doctrine be P. 233. taken in his own terms; and I have now given a larger and fuller account why I am far from being convinced by the way he hath

uſed for reſolving Faith. Paſſing by therefore his challenge, which I accept of, as long as he holds to the *weapon* of *Reaſon* and *Civility*, I come to conſider his laſt enquiry, *why*
P. 236. *I ſhould come to doubt of ſuch an obligation in Poſterity, to believe their Anceſtors in matters of Faith*; and he judiciouſly reſolves it into *a ſtrange diſtortion of Humane Nature*,
P. 237. but ſuch as it ſeems, is the proper effect of the *Proteſtants Temper, which is*, ſaith he, *to chuſe every one his Faith by his private Judgement, or Wit, working upon diſputable words.* Which as far as we own it, is not to believe what we ſee no ground for; and if this be ſuch a *diſtortion of Humane Nature*, I envy not Mr. *S*'s Uprightneſs and Perfection. If he means that we build our Faith on our private Judgments, in oppoſition to *Scripture*, or the *Univerſal Tradition* of the *Church* in all Ages, let him prove it evidently in one particular, and I engage for my ſelf and all true *Proteſtants*, we will renounce the belief of it. If he hath any thing farther to object againſt the grounds of our Religion, he knows where to Attack me; let him undertake the whole, or elſe acknowledge it a moſt unreaſonable thing thus to charge Falſities upon us, and then ſay we have nothing elſe to ſay for our ſelves. We pretend not to chuſe our Faith, but heartily embrace whatever appears to have been delivered by *Chriſt*

or

or his *Apoſtles*; but we know the *Church* of *Rome* too well to believe all which ſhe would impoſe upon us, and are loth to have her chuſe our Religion for us, ſince we know ſhe hath choſen ſo ill for her ſelf. But if Mr. *S.* will not believe me in ſaying thus, what reaſon have I to believe him in ſaying otherwiſe? Such general charges then ſignifie nothing, but every one muſt judge according to the reaſon on both ſides.

§ 17. I now come to the laſt part of my task; which is to ſhew, *that this way is repugnant to common Senſe and Experience, and that the* Church *of* Rome *hath apparently altered from what was the belief of former Ages.* To which purpoſe my words are, *It is to no purpoſe to prove impoſſibility of motion when I ſee men move; no more is it to prove that no Age of the Church could vary from the preceding, when we can evidently prove that they have done it. And therefore this Argument is intended only to catch eaſie Minds that care not for a ſearch into the Hiſtory of the ſeveral Ages of the Church, but had rather ſit down with a ſuperficial Subtilty, than ſpend time in farther enquiries.* But *two things* Mr. *S.* tells me *are required e'er I can ſee that their Faith varies from the former; firſt to ſee what their Church holds now, and then to ſee what the former Church held before; and he kindly tells me, if he ſees any thing, I ſee* P. 238.

neither well. It ſeems I want Mr. *S*'s *Spectacles* of Oral Tradition to ſee with; but as yet I have no cauſe to complain of the want of them, but I ſee much better without them than with them. He tells me, *I cannot ſee what their preſent Church holds, and therefore I cannot aſſure any what was held before; becauſe, if I renounce Tradition, I take away all means of knowing. The reaſon why I cannot candidly ſee* (as he phraſes it) *what their Church holds now, is, becauſe I cannot diſtinguiſh between Faith and its Explication, ſome Schoolmen and the Church.* By which it ſeems it is impoſſible for me to know what their Church holds concerning *Invocation of Saints*, *Worſhip of Images*, *Communion in one kind*; for thoſe are the points I there mention, wherein it is evident, that the *Church* of *Rome* hath receded from the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Church. Or are theſe only the Opinions and Practices of ſome *Schoolmen* among them, and not the Doctrine and Practice of their *Church*? But that we might come to ſome fuller ſtate of theſe Controverſies, I wiſh Mr. *S.* would ſettle ſome ſure way whereby we might know diſtinctly what are the Doctrines and Practices of their Church. If the *Council* of *Trent* and *Roman Catechiſm* be ſaid to be the Rule of *Doctrine*, I deſire no other; ſo that thoſe may be interpreted by Practices univerſally allowed among

mong them. As when that *Council* only defined, that *due Honour be given to Saints*; the general Practice of that *Church* may tell us what they mean by that *due Honour*; and if that be not fair, I know not what is. But I ſee all the ſhift Mr. *S.* hath, is, when he is pinched, to ſay *theſe are the Opinions of Scholmen and private Speculators, and not the Doctrine of their Church.* And if ſuch ſhifts as theſe are muſt ſerve the turn, I ſhould wonder if ever he be to ſeek for an anſwer. But the ſhorteſt anſwer of all would be, that none but thoſe of their Church can know what ſhe holds; and therefore it is to no purpoſe for *Proteſtants* to write againſt her; or it may be, that none but Mr. *S.* and one or two more can tell; for many among them ſay, thoſe are the Doctrines of their *Church* which they deny to be. So that except Mr. *White* and Mr. *S.* and ſome very few *demonſtrators* more, all the reſt are *Schoolmen, private Opinators,* and not to be relied on. *But* P. 236. *I cannot ſee what their Church held formerly neither.* No wonder at all of that; for if I cannot ſee an Object ſo near me as the preſent *Church*, how can it be expected I ſhould ſee one ſo much farther off as the Doctrine of former Ages? And his reaſon is ſo ſtrong, as may well perſwade me out of one, at leaſt, of my Five Senſes. *For*, ſaith he, *if I queſtion Tradition, I queſtion whether there be*

any Doctrine delivered, and ſo any Fathers. And is not this argued like a Demonſtrator? Firſt he ſuppoſes there never was any way uſed in the world but Oral Tradition, and then ſtrongly infers, if I deny that, I can know nothing. But I can yet hardly perſwade my ſelf that the *Fathers* only ſate in Chimney-Corners teaching their Children by word of mouth, and charging them to be ſure to do ſo to theirs; but as they loved preſerving the Doctrine of Faith, they ſhould have a great care never to write down a word of it. But why, I wonder, ſhould Mr. *S.* think, that if I do not allow of Oral Tradition, I muſt needs queſtion whether there were any *Fathers*? I had thought I might have known there had been *Fathers* by their *Children*? I mean the *Books* they left behind them. But if all Mr. *S.* pleads for be only this, that no *Books* can be certainly conveyed without Tradition, he diſpute's without an Adverſary; but as I never oppoſed this, ſo I am ſure it doth him little ſervice. It is then from the Books of the *Fathers* that I find what the ſenſe of the *Church* of their Age was, and from thence I have ſhewed how vaſtly different the Opinions and Practices of the *Roman Church* are from thoſe of the *Primitive*. Although then I may not think my ſelf obliged to believe all that the preſent *Church* delivers for matter

of

of Faith; yet I hope I may find what the Opinions and Practice of the former *Church* were by the Records that are left of it. And the reaſon why I cannot think any one obliged to believe what every Age of the *Church* delivers, is, becauſe I think no man obliged to believe Contradictions; and I ſee the Opinions and Practices of ſeveral Ages apparently contrary to each other.

§ 18. Well, but I call this way a *Superficial Subtilty*; and ſo I think it ſtill; ſo little have Mr. *S*'s demonſtrations wrought upon me. *But*, ſaith he, *is that which is wholly built on the nature of things Superficial*? No; but that which pretends to be ſo built, may. And of that nature I have ſhewed this way to be, and not the former. But that I may not think him *Superficial* as well as his way, he puts a profound Queſtion to me, *What do I think Controverſie is*? and that he may the better let me know what it is, he anſwers himſelf. *I deal plainly with you*, ſaith he, *you may take it to be an Art of Talking, and I think you do ſo, though you will not profeſs it; but I take it to be a Noble Science.* But to let him ſee that I will deal as plainly with him, as he doth with me, I will *profeſs* it, that I not only think *Controverſie* as uſually managed, but ſome mens way of demonſtrating (Mr. *S.* may eaſily know whom I mean) to be a mere *Art of Talking*, and nothing elſe. But *he takes it to be a Noble Science*;

Science; yes doubtleſs, if Mr. *S.* manage it, and he be the judge of it himſelf. His meaning I ſuppoſe is, by his following words,
P. 240. *that he goes upon certain Principles, and we do not.* We have already ſeen how certain his Principles have been, and I ſhould be ſomewhat aſhamed of my *Religion* if I had no better. But what our *Rule* of *Faith* is, hath been amply diſcourſed already by you, and that in Mr. *S's clearing Method*, that nothing is left for me to do, but to touch at what remains, and concludes this anſwer. I had the better to illuſtrate the weakneſs of that Argument from *Oral Tradition*, brought an inſtance in that caſe parallel, *viz.* that if one Ages delivering to another would prove that the Faith of Chriſt was in every Age unalterable, becauſe no Age did teſtifie any ſuch alteration to be in it; by the ſame Argument the world might be proved eternal, becauſe no Age did ever teſtifie to another, that the world was ever otherwiſe than it is. So that if Oral Tradition were only to be relied on, there could be no evidence given of the worlds being ever otherwiſe than it is, and conſequently the world muſt be believed to have been always what we ſee it is. This, as far as I can apprehend, is a clear and diſtinct Ratiocination, and purpoſely deſigned to prove that we muſt admit of other Rules to judge of Alterations in the *Church* by, beſides Oral Tradition. But Mr. *S.* (in

5. (in his own expreſſion) *ſtrangely roving from the Mark* I aimed at, profeſſes *there is not a tittle in it parallel to his* medium, *nay, that he never ſaw in his Life more Abſurdities couched in fewer words.* But I muſt take all patiently from a man *who ſtill perches on the Specifical Nature of things, and never flags below the Sphere of Science.* Yet by his good leave, he either apprehends not, or wilfully miſtakes my meaning; for my Argument doth not proceed upon the belief of the worlds Eternity, which, in his anſwer, he runs wholly upon as far as *Eighthly and Laſtly*, but upon the evidence of Oral Tradition as to no diſcernable alteration in any Age of it. For the Queſtion between us, is, whether in matters of alteration in the Faith or Practice of the Church, we are bound to relie only on the Teſtimony of Oral Tradition; ſo that if no Age can be inſtanced in wherein any Alteration was made, and this delivered by that Age, then we are bound to believe there hath been no Alteration ſince *Chriſt* and the *Apoſtles* times; now I ſay, if this hold good, I will prove the World Eternal by the ſame Argument; taking this for our Principle, that we are bound to relie only on Oral Tradition in the Caſe, Originally derived from the matter of Fact ſeen by thoſe of the firſt Age; for that which never was otherwiſe than it is, is Eternal; but we cannot know by Oral Tradition that the World

P. 241.

P. 242.

ever

ever was otherwiſe than it is; for no Age of the World can be inſtanced in, wherein we have any Teſtimony of any Alteration that was in it. Either then we muſt believe that the World ever was what it is, *i. e.* Eternal; or elſe we muſt ſay, that we are not to relie barely on Oral Tradition in this Caſe, but we muſt judge whether the World were made or no, by other *Mediums* of Scripture and Reaſon. And this was all which I aimed at, *viz.* to ſhew that where there is no evidence from Oral Tradition; yet if there be *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, there is ſufficient ground for our Faith to ſtand upon. And ſo I apply it to the preſent Caſe; though we could not prove barely from the *Tradition* of any one Age, that there had been any Alteration in the Faith or Practice of the *Church*; yet if I can prove that there hath been ſuch from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, this is ſufficient for me to believe it. And now I dare appeal to the indifferent Reader, whether this be ſo *full of Abſurdities*, or it be ſuch a *rambling Chi-*
P. 243. *merical Argument* (as he calls it,) *no two pieces of which hang together with themſelves, or any thing elſe.* Which being expreſſions of as great Modeſty as Science, I am content Mr. *S.* ſhould bear away the honour of them and his demonſtrations together.

§ 19. The laſt thing he quarrels with me for, is, that I ſay, *if we can evidently prove, that*

that there have been Alterations in the Church, then it is to no purpoſe to prove that impoſſible which we ſee actually done. And this appears not only becauſe the Scripture ſuppoſes a Degeneracy in the Chriſtian Church, which could never be, if every Age of the Church did infallibly Believe and Practiſe as the Precedent up to Chriſt's Time did; but becauſe we can produce clear evidence that ſome things are delivered by the preſent Church, which muſt be brought in by ſome Age ſince the time of Chriſt; for which I refer the Reader to what I had ſaid about Communion in one kind, Invocation of Saints, and Worſhip of Images: In all which, I ſay, *I had proved evidently that they were not in uſe in ſome Ages of the Chriſtian Church; and it is as evident that theſe are delivered by the preſent Church, and therefore this Principle muſt needs be falſe.* In anſwer to this, Mr. *S.* wiſhes, *I would tell him firſt what Evidence means, whether a ſtrong Fancy, or a Demonſtration?* I mean that which is enough to perſwade a wiſe man, who judges according to the cleareſt reaſon, which I am ſure is more than ever his Demonſtrations will do. But it is a pleaſant ſpectacle to ſee how Mr. *S.* lays about him, at my ſaying that the *Scripture* ſuppoſes a Degeneracy in the Chriſtian Church. *Incomparably argued!* ſaith he, *why, ſee we not the place? Does it evidently ſpeak of Faith, or Manners; the Univerſal Church, or particu-*

particular Perſons? but be it in Faith, be it Univerſal, does it ſuppoſe this Degeneracy already paſt, which is only proper to your purpoſe, or yet to come? That is, does it ſay there muſt be a total Apoſtaſie in Faith before the Year 1664? *Alas, he had forgot this.* Moſt incomparably anſwered! For if the Degeneracy be in 1665. or any Years after, what becomes of Mr. *S*'s Demonſtration then, that no Errors could come into the Church? but it ſeems his Demonſtration holds but till 1664. and I eaſily believe another Year will never believe the truth of it. But if ſuch a thing as a Degeneracy be poſſible, how then ſtands the Infallibility of Tradition, when there can be no Degeneracy without falling from the Doctrine and Practices of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*? But that ſuch a Degeneracy hath already been in that which calls it ſelf the *Catholick Church*, and that both in Faith and Manners, I ſhall refer Mr. *S.* to the Learned Author of the late *Idea of Antichriſtianiſm* and *Synopſis Prophetica*, where he may find enough to perſwade him that his Demonſtration was far from holding ſo long as 1664. And now I leave the Reader to judge whether the foregoing Evidences againſt the Infallibility of *Oral Tradition*, or Mr. *S*'s Demonſtrations have the greater force of Reaſon in them. And if he will not *ſtoop* ſo far from the *height* of his *Perch*, as to take notice of what I have elſewhere ſaid, I am reſolved

reſolved to let him ſee I am not at all concerned about it: I begin to underſtand him ſo well by this *Appendix*, that I can give my ſelf a reaſonable account why he thought it not fit to meddle with any other part of my Book. But if Mr. *S.* be reſolved not to anſwer any of the Teſtimonies I there produce, unleſs *I ſingle them out, and print them at the end of this Anſwer,* (*i. e.* remove them from that evidence which attends them in the *Series* of the Diſcourſe) I can only ſay, he is the moſt imperious Anſwerer I have met with, who is reſolved never to deal with an Adverſary, but on his own unreaſonable terms. Thus heartily wiſhing Mr. *S*'s Science as great as his Opinion of it, and a good effect of our endeavours to promote the one, by removing the other, I am P. 244.

Sir,

Your affectionate friend

and ſervant,

London, June 28th. 1665.

Edward Stillingfleet.

FINIS.

Poſtſcript.

SIR,

SInce the diſpatch of the former Papers, I have met with another Treatiſe, wherein I find my ſelf concerned, written by the Authour of *Fiat Lux*, the Title whereof is *Diaphanta:* I am afraid the Title affrights you; for I aſſure you it is the moſt formidable thing in his whole Book. But the man is a very modeſt man, and hugely different from Mr. *S*'s humour; for he is ſo far from offering to demonſtrate the grounds of faith; that all he pretends to in the title of his Book, is *to excuſe Catholick Religion againſt the oppoſition of ſeveral Adverſaries.* What fault I pray hath the *Catholick Religion* committed, that it muſt now come to

be *excuſed* inſtead of being *defended*? But when I look into that part which concerns my ſelf, I preſently underſtand the meaning of it, which is not *to excuſe Catholick Religion*, but *themſelves* for not being able to *defend* it. For he very ingeniouſly tells us,

P. 210. *that faith is firm and conſtant, though all his talk for it be miſerably weak: i. e.* he is ſure they have an excellent Religion, though he knows not what to ſay for it; and their faith is a very good faith, but it hath not yet had the good fortune to be under-

P. 209. ſtood by them. For he acknowledges, that *as often as they diſpute, they are beyond the buſineſs*, (ſo may any one believe, who reads their late Books,) which is in effect to ſay, there is no way left of diſputing any longer with adverſaries about their faith; onely they muſt believe it ſtoutly themſelves; but it is to no purpoſe to offer to defend it. Nay, it doth their faith a great deal of miſchief; *for*, ſaith he, *in reading controverſies, we ſee not ſo much the nature of the faith, as the wit of him who propoſes or defends it.* From whence we may eaſily gather what unſpeakable miſchief they do their cauſe by writing for it. By which expreſſions, we may gueſs at what a low ebb the defence of their faith is among them: for the way now taken to defend it, is by diſowning the defenders of it, and by ſaying that they onely vent their own opinions; and though we confute them

them never ſo much, yet their faith holds good ſtill. Was ever a good cauſe driven to ſuch miſerable ſhifts as theſe are, eſpecially among thoſe who pretend to wit and learning? One, he ſaith, *T. C.* vents a private opinion of his own, and it is not a pin matter whether it ſtand or fall; another, he ſaith the ſame of *I. S.* a third of *J. V. C.* and yet for all this, their religion is very firm and ſure, and they are all at perfect agreement about it. Is this the *victory over me*, Mr. *S.* mentions to be ſo eaſie a thing? I ſee that by the ſame figure Mr. *S.* calls his way of arguing demonſtration, running out of the field ſhall be accounted conquering. For I never ſaw any perſon do it more openly than this Authour does. For he plainly confeſſes, *that his Catholick Gentleman went quite beſides his buſineſs, that he built upon indefenſible principles, that his theological ratiocination was indeed pretty but too weak to hold.* And are not we hugely too blame, if we do not cry up ſuch mighty Conquerours as theſe are? Truly, Sir, I expect the very ſame anſwer ſhould be returned to your Book; that Mr. *S*'s argument *is a pretty theological ratiocination; and that your anſwer is not unwitty; but though that way will not hold, another will.* Thus, when they are beaten off *Infallibility*, they run to *Tradition*: and when they are again beaten off *Tradition*, then back again to *Infallibility*. So that the ſhort of all their anſwers

ſwers is, though ſuch a one cannot defend our faith, yet I can; though I cannot, yet the faith is firm and conſtant ſtill. I wonder what their *Superiours* think of this way of proceeding among them; we ſhould imagine, if they be ſo weak as they ſay themſelves, they had much better keep them from appearing abroad, and expoſing their cauſe ſo ridiculouſly to contempt. But it may be, they think their *faith* is the better as well as their *devotion*, for their *ignorance*: and that it would be a mighty diſparagement to their cauſe, for ſuch ſilly people to be able to defend it. It is enough for them to admire it themſelves, and to ſay as their common people uſe to do, though they cannot defend it, yet there are ſome that can. And although it may be no particular perſon can do it, yet their cauſe is able to defend it ſelf. But for all that I can ſee, by ſuch kind of anſwers, the intention of them is, to intreat us not to triumph over the weakneſs of their preſent Writers, but to wait till the *Cauſe* it ſelf thinks fit to write. And when it doth ſo, they may expect a farther anſwer; but it were a great piece of cruelty for us to haſten their ruine, who fall ſo faſt before us by each others Pens.

FINIS.